

Session 72: Recap of the Olive Tree Illustration, Continued

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 72)

Romans 11:25 *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*

Being ignorant of what Paul teaches here can produce a false wisdom: a wisdom that comes from vanity and pride.

Oxford English Dictionary

Wise in your own conceits: in one's own private opinion, estimation, or judgment; *now colored by sense 6*.

#6 *An overweening* opinion of oneself; overestimation of one's own qualities, personal vanity, or pride; conceitedness.

Oxford English Dictionary

Overweening: too great expectation or opinion as to oneself: excessive self-importance, presumption, arrogance, self-conceit.

Here is the problem once again, "wise in your own conceits," being highminded, thinking erroneously about what God is doing in this dispensation of Gentile grace; thinking erroneously about what God has done in turning to us Gentiles and what that means in connection with his program with Israel and their future.

Paul says I do not want you to be wise in your own conceits. When you are conceited, you think more about yourself than you ought to think.

Romans 11:25 *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*

So what is it that Paul does not want Gentiles to be ignorant of? The answer is in the last part of verse 25 and it comes in two parts:

1. Blindness is happened to Israel.
2. That blindness is temporary (*until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*).

The issue of Israel's blindness should remind us of something we saw earlier in this chapter, verse 7.

Romans 11:7 *What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded*

What was it that Israel was seeking but they did not get because they tried to get it by the law? They were trying to be righteous. The election obtained it – they got the righteousness. And the rest of Israel – the unbelieving Israel, they were blinded. And blinded to what? How that righteousness comes. It came by Jesus Christ – their Redeemer!

The nation at large rejected Jesus Christ, his message, and his ministry. As a result, they were blinded to his identity and the gospel of the kingdom. They were blinded to the righteousness which is by faith, and because they were blinded to that, they continued to use the law to make themselves righteous.

The members of the little flock were not blinded. They responded by faith to the message of the gospel. They obtained the righteousness which is by faith.

In verse 25, we see Paul bringing up the issue of blindness again. The point he is making in verse 25 is not a repeat of verse 7, but here is saying: just as Israel suffered a blindness back during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ (verse 7), Israel is suffering a blindness today during this dispensation of Gentile grace. The blindness Israel suffers today is a dispensational blindness.

What is a dispensational blindness? And why should we even use that term, as it does not occur in the scriptures that way. We use the term ‘dispensational blindness’ as a phrase that encapsulates all of the things that Israel is blind to during this dispensation of Gentile grace. And what are they blind to today?

- Their fallen status before God.
- What God is doing today with Gentiles apart from Israel.

Since they cannot see their prophetic program being carried out today, there is a layer of blindness (so to speak) concerning what is happening today.

Blindness is nothing new for Israel, but the blindness Paul refers to in Romans 11:25 is different in that, this blindness has a mystery component to it. That is to say, this blindness is not about the things of their program, but Israel is now blinded to things in connection to the dispensational change. That is why we can call this a dispensational blindness.

This blindness, coupled with a continued desire to see their program come to pass, would cause Israel to misconstrue events happening in the world. This is exactly what happens to some preachers who want to make the overthrow of the temple in 70 A.D. the fulfillment of what Jesus referred to in the *Olivet Discourse*.

Matthew 24:1 *And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. ² And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

It is what makes men think that Israel becoming a nation in May 1948 is the ‘budding of the fig tree’ which signals the fast approaching coming of the Lord.

Matthew 24:32 *Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: ³³ So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. ³⁴ Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.*

Israel’s mystery blindness is with regard to:

- What God is (and is not) doing with Israel today.
- What God is doing with Gentiles today.

Paul has something to say about that blindness.

Romans 11:25 *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*

Question is raised by “in part” statement in this verse. This is a raging controversial question in the at large communities of God blinding some Israelites and not others. Mike explains his view point for remainder of this session.

Matthew 24:1 *And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. ² And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

Paul says that Israel’s blindness is “in part.” That blindness is in part in the sense that it is “until” something. The blindness of Israel will continue, “until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.”

It is important to distinguish between the “times of the Gentiles” and the “fullness of the Gentiles.”

Space for personal reflection and notes

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 73: Times of the Gentiles

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 73)

Mike skipped this verse in last session and is now reviewing.

It is what makes men think that Israel becoming a nation in May 1948 is the ‘budding of the fig tree’ which signals the fast approaching coming of the Lord.

Matthew 24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: ³³ So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. ³⁴ Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

Romans 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

Revisit dispensational change and blindness briefly.

The “times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21) does not finish until Jesus Christ returns at the great and terrible day of the Lord: his second advent.

Luke 21:5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, ⁶ As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. ⁷ And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? ⁸ And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. ⁹ But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. ¹⁰ Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: ¹¹ And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. ¹² But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. ¹³ And it shall turn to you for a testimony. ¹⁴ Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: ¹⁵ For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. ¹⁶ And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. ¹⁷ And ye shall be hated of all men for my

name's sake. ¹⁸ But there shall not an hair of your head perish. ¹⁹ In your patience possess ye your souls. ²⁰ And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. ²¹ Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. ²² For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. ²³ But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. ²⁴ And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. ²⁵ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; ²⁶ Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. ²⁷ And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

Now, compare this with Revelation.

Revelation 11:1 *And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. ² But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.*

Daniel's 70th week is divided into two parts of 3½ years. Each of those parts is 42 months or 1260 days. What is being referred to in Revelation 11 is the last half of Daniel's 70th week.

At that time, the Gentiles will invade and destroy Jerusalem.

The action of Revelation 11 takes place during the "times of the Gentiles" to which Luke referred. The times of the Gentiles will not end until the Lord Jesus (the stone which is cut out without hands) returns and crushes these Gentile armies.

Daniel 2:31 *Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. ³² This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, ³³ His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. ³⁴ Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the*

image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. ³⁵ Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

But what Paul is saying in Romans 11 is not the “times of the Gentiles” but the “fullness of the Gentiles.” If Paul was referring to the times of the Gentiles, then it could be that the body of Christ would go through Daniel’s 70th week.

The times of the Gentiles is described in Hosea 3. This chapter puts the times of the Gentiles in a nutshell, so to speak.

Hosea 3:4 *For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: ⁵ Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.*

When did Israel begin to function without a king? When in their history did Israel no longer have a king? Israel and Judah both lost their kings when they went away into captivity. For Jerusalem, there was no king in Judah at the Babylonian captivity, which is the start of the 5th course of punishment. That means, according to Hosea, this is the beginning of the times of the Gentiles, when the Gentiles have political and governmental dominion over Israel.

Now, think back to Daniel 2 and the dream Nebuchadnezzar had concerning the image.

Everything from the head and shoulders of gold to the feet of iron and clay represents the times of the Gentiles.

It is important to distinguish between the times of the Gentiles and the fullness of the Gentiles.

Romans 11:25 *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*

What is the “fullness of the Gentiles?”

(An aside: Discussing points of Hosea 3:4 and the “creatures” referenced in Ephesians. For the last 20 minutes or so there are no notes.)

Jeremiah 49:33 *And Hazor shall be a dwelling for dragons, and a desolation for ever: there shall no man abide there, nor any son of man dwell in it.*

Isaiah 34:8 *For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. ⁹ And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. ¹⁰ It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. ¹¹ But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. ¹² They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. ¹³ And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls. ¹⁴ The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. ¹⁵ There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate. ¹⁶ Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them. ¹⁷ And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they shall possess it for ever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein.*

Romans 3:13 *Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:*

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 74: The Fulness of the Gentiles

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 74)

We left off last time distinguishing between the “times of the Gentiles” and the “fulness of the Gentiles.”

The times of the Gentiles was the political and governmental control of the nation of Israel by various _____ beginning with the _____.

Israel was particularly blind to three issues during the carrying out of their program:

1. Jesus being their _____.
2. The inability of the law to make them _____.
3. Their need of a _____.

Romans 11:25 *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*

Oxford English Dictionary

Part: a portion or division of the whole

My understanding of the verse is that the “part” or ‘partial’ aspect has to do with the ‘whole’ of the blindness and not the whole of Israel. In other words, it does not say that part of Israel is blinded, but it is the blindness that is in part. In other words, there is a particular part of Israel’s blindness that Paul is now focusing on: the dispensational aspect of their blindness.

There is one more reason I do not take this to be saying that some of Israel is blinded and some are not. There are only two groups in Israel: the believing and the unbelieving. The believing Israelites are not the ones who are blinded. It is the unbelieving portion of the nation that suffers the blindness because it is their unbelief that has produced the blindness. To say that the blindness only continues until the end of this dispensation of Gentile grace is to say that there will be no more unbelieving Israelites after the blessed hope.

Paul says this blindness will be “until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” However, we know that even after the rapture, there will still be unbelieving, blinded Israelites in the nation. As a matter of fact, they will comprise the majority of the nation.

If the blindness in part is referring to the fact that some Israelites were blinded and other Israelites are not, well, that is not going to end with the fullness of the Gentiles. There will still be both groups even after the dispensation of Gentile grace has come to an end. So that cannot be what Paul is talking about.

We also know from this verse that this dispensational blindness is not permanent, but it is temporary; it is “until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” In other words, when God has completed his working with the Gentiles, the dispensation of Gentile grace will come to an end and along with it, the blindness that Israel had to the dispensational change will also be over. But that does not mean they suddenly see Jesus as their Messiah, they understand the law properly and they see their need of a redeemer. They are still blinded, only now the dispensational part is no longer an issue. That in part of their blindness is only until the fullness of the Gentiles, then that in part aspect of their dispensational blindness goes away.

What is the “fullness of the Gentiles?”

Oxford English Dictionary

Fulness: 3) completion, perfection; complete or ample measure; 5) the condition of being well supplied with what one needs;

The “fullness of the Gentiles” would be the completion of what God is presently doing with Gentiles. We could say, that God’s purpose for this dispensation of Gentile grace will be completed. And what does God want to accomplish; what is God’s purpose with the Gentiles?

In order to answer the question, we need to go over to the book of Ephesians. I know this is an advanced epistle, so we will not be looking at the details as though we are going to study it out. Nevertheless, to get us started, I need to at least give us a basic overview outline of the book.

The three phases to the attack of Satan’s policy of evil:

This is an alert to and remedy for the next round of the advanced tactics to Phase 1 of the policy of evil, which are designed to thwart our godly thinking.

- Phase One: _____.
- Phase Two: _____.
- Phase Three: _____.

In Ephesians (advance doctrine), Paul begins to set forth:

1. The _____ of the gospel of Christ.
2. The doctrines for our _____.

Outline the book of Ephesians (broken down into 3 major sections):

1. Ephesians __ : __ - __ : __ - The doctrines for our advanced godly
_____.
2. Ephesians __ : __ - __ : __ - Doctrines for our advanced godly
_____.

Space for personal reflection and notes

Space for personal reflection and notes