

Session 57: Paul Quotes Moses and Isaiah

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 57)

Refers back to Session 56 (see page 692) notes and Israel's blindness.

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.*

Romans 11:8 *(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.*

Written where? Paul is going to quote from Isaiah and Deuteronomy. And if he is quoting from Deuteronomy, who is he likely quoting? Moses.

There are two issues in Romans 11:8: 1) the spirit of slumber, and 2) eyes that should not see and ears that do not hear.

The first of these issues (the spirit of slumber) is from Isaiah 29:10.

Isaiah 29:10 *For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.*

If you are in a spirit of deep sleep, it means you are unaware of the things going on around you. You are ignorant of what is happening.

The second issue (the eyes and ears) is found in Deuteronomy 29:4.

Deuteronomy 29:4 *Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.*

Putting all this together, what Paul is saying in Romans 11 about the Israelites as he recalls what Moses and Isaiah said back in their scriptures: how that they had the spirit of slumber because they refused the truth, that they closed their eyes so they would not, and they shut their ears so that they would not hear. Well, Paul says, that condition is continuing "unto this day."

Romans 11:8 *(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.*

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. ⁸ (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.*

While all of this may look like it is God that is putting the people to sleep and blinding their eyes and dulling their hearing, the truth is, they did this to themselves. Look at Acts 28.

Acts 28:23 *And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. ²⁴ And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. ²⁵ And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,*

So what did Isaiah say to the fathers?

Acts 28:26 *Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:*

And why will they hear and see? Because God chooses who can hear and see and believe? No.

Acts 28:27 *For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*

What was the message Israel was rejecting?

Isaiah 29:10 *For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.*

What was the message they went to sleep under?

The people closed their own ears and eyes. Why did they? According to Acts 28:27, it was because they did not want to be converted!

Paul affirms that what Israel did back there is exactly what is going on in his day.

We have already established that Israel, and Israel alone, is responsible for her apostasy. We cannot turn it around as though Israel had no choice to believe because God blinded them and it was never in their power to believe.

Session 58: The Consequences of Rejection

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 58)

We were talking about: what was the message Israel was rejecting?

Isaiah 29:10 *For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.*

What was the message they went to sleep under, and in contrast, what is Paul's message?

Isaiah 28:14 *Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. ¹⁵ Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: ¹⁶ Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. ... ¹⁸ And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. ¹⁹ From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report. ²⁰ For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it. ²¹ For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act. ²² Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.*

Isaiah 29:7 *And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision. ... ¹⁰ For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. ... ¹³ Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:*

¹⁴ Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. ... ¹⁹ The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. ²⁰ For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, ...

Turn to Acts 13 and notice how Paul confronts Israel.

***Acts 13:46** Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.*

Who is said to be responsible here? They are, not God.

***Acts 18:5** And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. ⁶ And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.*

***Acts 22:18** And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.*

As these passages indicate, Israel is ultimately to blame.

Why does God say that he is going to give them a spirit of slumber and deafen their ears and blind their eyes? Because that is Israel's response to the truth, that is Israel's response to the light. How does God "harden" them? The same way he did with Pharaoh, by giving them more truth and more light. By having the truth declared in their hearing, they are being deafened and blinded.

No, God is not causing them to reject; he is not making them deaf and blind as an overt act. The only way for them to be converted is by the truth. But if they reject that truth, the result will be a further blindness to the truth. That is how God is giving them a spirit of slumber: eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear. God is simply giving the truth and a man's response to it determines what happens in him. God is not picking and choosing who will hear, men choose that for themselves.

For those who received the truth, they obtained what they were seeking – righteousness. What happened to the rest? They were "blinded" by the truth; blinded by the light.

John 12:37 *But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: ³⁸ That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?*

What was the result of their rejection?

John 12:39 *Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, ⁴⁰ He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. ⁴¹ These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.*

How did God blind them and harden their heart? By means of the miracles that were performed in front of them!

Jesus was not what Israel wanted to see, his message was not what they wanted to hear; therefore, every time he performed a miracle to substantiate his message, they were hardened against him all the more! Yes, he did it, but not by an overt act of blinding them, but by presenting them with the truth. He kept presenting the truth because the truth was the only way they could be saved.

There is something interesting to see when we look at the issue of Israel's blindness. With every pronouncement of their blindness, the kingdom is further postponed.

Turn to Exodus. Three months after they left Egypt, God tells Moses to tell the people something.

Exodus 19:1 *In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. ² For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. ³ And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; ⁴ Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: ⁶ And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. ⁷ And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.*

God was ready to establish a kingdom back in Exodus.

As God led Israel out of Egypt, Israel was faced with ten tests, all of which they failed. (All ten of those are recorded in the book of Numbers.)

Therefore, when we read Deuteronomy 29, we find God saying something interesting.

Deuteronomy 29:1 These are the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb. ² And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; ³ The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: ⁴ Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day. ⁵ And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot.

As recorded in the book of Numbers, they had ten opportunities put before them and they failed every one of them. Israel complained, Israel rejected God and Israel conspired to kill Moses. After those ten failures, Moses said to Israel that God had responded to them; they were blinded.

God wanted to give them a heart that perceives, eyes that see and ears that hear, but he was not able to give them those things because they rejected everything God was doing. Instead of having a heart of faith, they had hearts of unbelief.

The result? No kingdom.

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 59: The Consequences of Blindness

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 59)

This same kind of situation takes place in the days of David. As David prophesies about the Lord Jesus who will one day sit on David's throne, he makes the same kind of pronouncement that Moses did; Israel is blinded.

Psalms 69:21 *They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. ²² Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. ²³ Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.*

If they cannot see, then they are blinded. Result – no kingdom in the days of the Messiah.

Isaiah picked up this refrain and guess what we saw in the book of his prophecy? Blindness for Israel again, in the time of Jacob's trouble, and there will be no kingdom for Israel until after God's wrath is poured out.

With that in our thinking, now we see Paul saying that Israel is fallen and there is no kingdom. It is okay that there is no kingdom during this dispensation of Gentile grace, because God is reconciling the world unto himself. Israel has a chance to respond positively to what God is doing through Paul. Therefore, Paul concludes his Acts transition ministry (Acts 8-28) by saying:

Acts 28:25 *And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, ²⁶ Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: ²⁷ For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*

Just like they were blinded in the days of Moses, just like they were blinded in the days of the Lord Jesus, Paul says they are still blinded in his day when he writes the book of Romans.

Romans 11:11 *I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. ¹² Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?*

Here in Romans 11, we are learning specifically about the dispensational change that has taken place. We need to pay close attention to the terminology Paul uses in this chapter. Israel's stumble, fall, diminishing, and fullness are the four terms which we need to understand and

appreciate. Everything in Romans chapter 9-11 is about the doctrine of what has happened to Israel and spoken about in connection with those four terms

Romans 11:11 *I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.*

1. Stumbling: It is important to recognize that Israel has stumbled more than once in their history, but not every stumble resulted in a fall.

Romans 11:12 *Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?*

2. Fall: The fall of Israel resulted after their stumbling during the extension of mercy (EoM). The fall has to do with Israel losing their favored nation status at the dispensational change. They are now fallen to the level of the Gentiles in the world.

Romans 11:12 *Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?*

3. Diminishing: The diminishing took place in the opening part of this dispensation and it was over by the time of Acts 28.

Paul has three significant pronouncements in Acts. I want you to mark them in your Bible.

- 1) First pronouncement – God is going to the Gentiles. Paul is rejected by the Jews in Asia and continues to go west. This marks the first part of the diminishing.

Acts 13:45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. ⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

- 2) Second pronouncement – Paul is rejected in Europe.

Acts 18:5 *And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. ⁶ And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.*

- 3) Third pronouncement – Paul is rejected in Rome. That finishes the diminishing.

Acts 28: 27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. ²⁸ Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

The book of Acts records the stumbling, fall and diminishing of the nation of Israel. That is why it stopped in Acts, after Paul makes his third pronouncement of the judicial response of God to Israel, in view of their stumbling over the Messiah.

Romans 11:12 Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness?

4. Fullness: Their fullness is yet to come when this dispensation of grace is concluded, as we will see Paul dealing with from verses 11-29. What is Israel's fullness? It is the fulfillment of everything God promised and covenanted to do with them. They will be the head of all nations, they will be a kingdom of priests, they will be a holy nation, and they will be the instrument through which God's blessings will come to all the nations.

Israel's stumble, fall, diminishing, and fullness are the four terms which we need to understand and appreciate. Everything in Romans chapter 9-11 is about the doctrine of what has happened to Israel and spoken about in connection with those four terms

Romans 11:11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

Space for personal reflection and notes