

ISRAEL'S BLINDNESS FOR A SEASON AND FOR A REASON

Several years ago a man of God, a splendid messenger of the grace of God, spoke at the FOUNDER'S WEEK CONFERENCE at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. This man was the pastor of a Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania. His subject was 'The Recovery of Lost Bible Truth'. He saw that 99% of the pastors and Bible teachers and all other Christians were not obeying Ephesians 3:9, "make all see what is the dispensation of the MYSTERY, which from the beginning of the world hath been 'HID IN GOD' . . . 'HID FROM GENERATIONS' 'BUT NOW IS 'MADE MANIFEST TO GOD'S SAINTS' . . . (Ephesians 3:9 and Colossians 1:25 and 26). The speaker stated that this glorious truth had been revealed and had then been lost. He said it was lost within two generations after the death of Paul. Then the speaker said, that after the truth concerning 'the dispensation of the MYSTERY' was lost, the truth concerning the coming of the Lord, before the tribulation to rapture the Church, and during the tribulation to save Israel and then to establish God's prophesied kingdom, was lost. He said in the apostasy that followed the death of the apostles, church-leaders ceased to differentiate between the prophesied kingdom of heaven, which Christ declared at hand (Matthew 4:17 and Mark 1:14 and 15), and the unprophesied BODY of Christ which began historically with the FALL of Israel (Romans 11:11). Then, said the speaker, it was not very long until the church-leaders, many of them unsaved religious leaders, substituted tradition for the Word of God (Matthew 15:6), preferred the praise of men to the praise of God (John 12:43) and the fundamental doctrine of 'justification by grace through faith' was lost, and the world and the church were plunged into centuries of religious darkness. The leaven had done its work. But it is still at work.

This continued, said the speaker, until Martin Luther was led by the Holy Spirit to believe 'the just shall live by faith'. As the result of Luther's conviction, vision, courage, zeal and aggressive evangelism, under God, the all-important Christian doctrine of 'justification by faith' was uncovered or recovered. Millions were saved as the result of the mighty reformation. Thus, said the speaker, the last of the great doctrines of the Church was the first to be recovered. Then the speaker said, God raised up other men of conviction and courage to clear Luther's 'justification' message of religious rites. Then God raised up the man of God, who perhaps did more to recover the truth concerning the difference between the unprophesied CHURCH, a spiritual ORGANISM rather than a religious organization or sectarian group, and the prophesied kingdom, which with the Fall of Israel was postponed until God completes 'The One New Man' of Ephesians 2:15, reconciling Jews and Gentiles in one Body by the cross (Ephesians 2:15 and 16), than any other man. Any man of God who is not grateful to God for John Darby and the recovery of truth by him and later propagated by the 'Plymouth Brethren', if he knows the facts, should be ashamed of himself.

Then, proceeded the speaker, God has seen fit to recover lost Bible truth in inverted order. Inasmuch as the truth of God, for which Paul suffered as a criminal (II Timothy 2:8 and 9 . . . Ephesians 6:19 and 20 . . . Colossians 4:3 and 4) has not been recovered to the degree that Christian pastors and Bible-teachers are now obeying Ephesians 3:9, the speaker said that task and responsibility belong to present-day Fundamentalists. What are we doing about it?

Let us first consider Ephesians 3:9 and Romans 11:25 and 26. Whether Christians plead negligence, disobedience or apathetic indifference or ignorance, after reading Ephesians 3:9,

they know that it is their duty and blessed privilege to “make all Christians see what is the dispensation of the MYSTERY, which from the beginning of the world was ‘HID IN GOD’ . . . ‘HID FROM AGES AND FROM GENERATIONS’ . . . ‘now made manifest to God’s saints’.” (Colossians 1:24 to 26). Whatever the MYSTERY of Ephesians and Colossians is, it is the duty of every Christian to make it known to others.

Inasmuch as no Christian, who does not know the MYSTERY of Romans 11:25, has ever seen, or will ever see, what is the dispensation of the MYSTERY of Ephesians and Colossians, it behooves every Christian to pray for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation and have the eyes of his understanding enlightened (Ephesians 1:15 to 17), to first understand the meaning of Romans 11:25 and then to continue praying to be enlightened as to how to obey Ephesians 3:9. No Christian leader will be a faithful steward of the MYSTERIES of God until he is taught by the Holy Spirit the dispensational crisis recorded in the eleventh chapter of Romans. This means to understand that God sent blindness upon Israel for a season, and for a reason.

Let us see how this truth is foreshadowed in Acts 13:5 to 15. In these verses we read of a Jew, with an excellent name, but with a heart filled with guile. His name was ‘BAR-JESUS’, meaning ‘The Child of Jehovah-Saviour’. What a wonderful name! What a significant name! Comparing Acts 13:5 to 13 with some chapters concerning Israel in the Book of Isaiah, from chapters 41 to 47, we will learn that Israel was indeed, ‘BAR-JESUS’, ‘The Child of Jehovah-Saviour’. When we read the fearful denunciation of Christ upon Israel in Matthew 23:13 to 33 and compare His pronouncement upon Israel with the pronouncement upon Israel, recorded in I Thessalonians 2:14 to 16, we shall certainly know that ‘ISRAEL’, meaning ‘a prince with God’ (Genesis 32:28), was filled with guile. Christ told them that the devil was their father, although then claimed God. (John 8:41 to 44). Paul called ‘BAR-JESUS’, ‘the child of the devil’. (Acts 13:10). Then note the verse which follows: “And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind not seeing the sun for a season (kairos).” Then note what a Gentile did, when he saw what was done (the blindness of the ISRAELITE), believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord. As we read two or three verses in the eleventh chapter of Romans, let us see why all Gentiles should be astonished at the doctrine of the Lord and believe and be saved.

A blind man cannot see. He must be led by another hand. (Acts 13:11). God sent blindness upon ISRAEL. (Romans 11:8 to 10). ISRAEL stumbled and had a great FALL. (Romans 11:11). ISRAEL was diminished and was cast away. (Romans 11:12 and 15). Now read Romans 11:25 and know that God would not have Christians “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.” Then what? After Israel’s blindness for a season and for a reason, ISRAEL will be saved, for another reason. (Romans 11:26 to 29). The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

God sent blindness upon Israel for a reason and for a season. We might ask the difference between the cause of Israel’s blindness and the Divine reason or purpose for their blindness.

In Romans 11:21 we read that God spared not the natural branches (Israel). They were cut off because of unbelief. (Romans 11:20 and 21). Because of Israel’s unbelief, God offered special mercy to the Gentiles. (Romans 11:30). Concerning Israel’s blindness, “God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see . . . Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.” (Romans 11:8 to 10). Then follows what might be considered the most important dispensational verse of Scripture in the Bible, truth that marked a great turning-point in God’s dealings with Israel on the one hand and with the other nations on

the other hand: "Have they (Israel) stumbled that they should FALL? God forbid; but rather through their FALL salvation is come unto the Gentiles." (Romans 11:11). Then verse 12 states that because Israel was diminished and was caused to FALL, God extended to the Gentiles the opportunity to become RICH. Then Romans 11:15 states that the casting-away of Israel sent 'RECONCILIATION' to Gentiles.

In II Corinthians 8:9, I John 2:2, Romans 5:9 to 11 and Colossians 1:20 and 21, we learn that believing Gentiles are RICH, because the RICH CHRIST became poor; that they have obtained Divine MERCY because of Christ's death on the cross; that they have been 'RECONCILED' because Christ made peace by His shed blood on the cross. Open your Bible and read these seven verses with seven verses in the eleventh chapter of Romans and learn that believing Gentiles are RICH, RECONCILED and enjoy God's GRACE SALVATION AND MERCY, because God SPARED NOT His own Son and because God SPARED NOT His own nation. With these fourteen verses read several other verses in which is found the word 'NOW', indicating a radical change in God's dealings with the Gentiles. These verses are Romans 3:21, Romans 8:1, II Corinthians 5:16, Ephesians 2:13 and 2:19, Romans 11:30, Colossians 1:21 and Colossians 1:26. Surely these 'dispensational' NOWS' should convince any intelligent, spiritual student of the Scriptures that God offered a new deal to the human race when and because of the FALL of Israel. Therefore, it behooves every member of the Body of Christ to search the Scriptures diligently to learn when that FALL took place.

In the light of the Scriptures we have just mentioned, every Christian should know that Israel's blindness was for a reason. When we say 'reason', perhaps we should think of 'cause' and 'purpose'. When we read I Thessalonians 2:14 to 16, Romans 9:27 to 33, Acts 7:51 to 60 and Acts 13:45, we should know the 'cause' for Israel's stumbling and FALL. When we read Romans 11:25 to 33, we should learn God's 'purpose' in Israel's FALL. Why did God say in Romans 11:25, "I would not have Christians ignorant of 'THIS MYSTERY?'" Perhaps He knew that more than ninety percent of Christians in every generation would be ignorant. This ignorance is often due to the strong prejudice of some Christians, or to preconceived opinions based upon tradition substituted for the Word of God, rightly divided, and very largely to the apathetic indifference of the great multitude of church members who seem perfectly content to continue as 'INFANTS' on a milk diet. (Hebrews 5:11 to 6:1 . . . I Corinthians 3:1 to 3 . . . Ephesians 4:14 . . . I Corinthians 13:11). Then of course the god of this age, transformed into an angel of light, as head of spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies (Ephesians 6:11 and 12 . . . II Corinthians 11:13 to 15 and II Corinthians 11:1 to 3 and II Corinthians 4:3 and 4), will always do his utmost to keep religious sinners and saved religious people from knowing the glorious Divine Truth, 'GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE' in the dispensation and age of grace. Satan's principalities and powers are involved. (Ephesians 3:9 and 10). No Christian ignorant of 'THIS MYSTERY' in Romans 11:25 will, or can, make other Christians "see what is the dispensation of the MYSTERY, which from the beginning of the world hath been 'HID IN GOD'," "HID from ages and generations" . . . But NOW is made manifest to His saints." (Ephesians 3:9 . . . Colossians 1:24 to 26).

The blindness for a season and for a reason is explained in 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." . . . Then what? "And so all Israel shall be saved. . . 'AS IT IS WRITTEN' . . ." What is written? It is written in many of the Books from Genesis to Malachi, that God's 'kingdom' nation, Israel, will be established in a kingdom of righteousness and peace and prosperity on this

earth, with Jerusalem as the world capital; that Israel's Messiah and Prince and King will reign over Israel and the other nations. But it was not written in any of thirty-nine Books from Genesis to Malachi, that the building again of the tabernacle of David and the planting of Israel in their land (Amos 9:11 to 15) would be postponed for more than nineteen centuries; that while the prophesied kingdom is in abeyance Christ is to remain on His Father's throne in heaven, as Head of the Church, Which is His Body. Hence, 'THIS MYSTERY'.