

# JEW AND GENTILE PART 2

David Baker, prepared for the Presbytery word, 22 August 2021  
Transcription of recording, slightly edited

## Introduction

In this session we are looking at how God is gathering both Jew and Gentile into the body of Christ during the period of delay in the Seventy Weeks prophecy.

Our key verse for this session is where Paul said, 'That blindness in part has happened to Israel [that's the Jews] until the fullness of the Gentiles [or the fullness of the nations] comes in.' Rom 11:25.

In the last session we began to look at this discussion of the apostle Paul, concerning Jew and Gentile in the one body of Christ. It will be helpful to refresh ourselves on a few of the major points that Paul's making in this chapter.

## Olive tree represents the kingdom of God

*The first point* is that he used the illustration of an *olive tree* to represent the kingdom of God, which is the kingdom of sonship. Under the rulership of King David, the nation of Israel was called to be the earthly manifestation of the kingdom of God, and the head of the nations of the world.

## Jesus Christ is the Root of the olive tree

*The second point* that Paul was making is that, as the son of David, who has been raised from the dead and is now seated upon the Father's throne, Jesus Christ is 'the rich Root of the olive tree'. As we noted last week, the Root of the olive tree is not in the ground. The Root of the olive tree is in heaven, seated on a throne.

*Jesus Christ is that root.*

The olive tree now represents the kingdom of God in heaven.

## Jewish nation are the natural branches

*The third point* was that the apostle Paul likened the Jewish nation to the natural branches of the olive tree that have been 'broken off' because of their unbelief.

As we considered in our last session, there are several different examples of this unbelief. It was demonstrated firstly by the priests and the Jewish people who sewed up the veil in the temple after the offering of Christ and continued to make animal sacrifice.

We know that those animal sacrifices after the offering of Christ were an abomination to the Lord. This demonstrated their unbelief.

It was also demonstrated by the Jews who had already gone from Jerusalem, who were in dispersion in various places.

When Paul went to the synagogue in these places and proclaimed the gospel of sonship, and he was rejected, then those Jews in those places also demonstrated their unbelief and judged themselves unworthy of eternal life.

The most remarkable example of the unbelief that caused the natural branches to be broken off, or removed, from the olive tree was demonstrated by the elders in the Jerusalem church. It was demonstrated by the Jewish *Christians* in the Jerusalem church.

It was the elders of the Jerusalem church who imposed upon the apostle Paul the need to pay the expenses for the men who were coming to the end of their Nazarite vow and needed to make sacrifices in the temple. The Jewish elders imposed this upon Paul because they were the mouthpiece of the very large and influential Jewish faction in the Jerusalem church who professed to be followers of Christ.

They were zealous for the Law and not willing to let go of Jewish traditions.

The elders of the church had aligned themselves with this faction; or they'd become overwhelmed by this faction.

What we do know is that they pushed this agenda upon Paul. They had also sidelined James. This was an horrific *trampling* of Paul as the messenger of Christ. It was this trampling of the apostle Paul that caused the doors of the temple to be shut.

Remember that the Lord had given the temple precincts to the apostles to proclaim the word of life, but that brought this to an end. It caused the doors of the temple to be shut and the deliverance of the temple and the whole city of Jerusalem to judgement at the hands of the Romans in AD70.

### **Gentiles are wild branches**

The fourth point Paul made was that he also likened the Gentiles to 'wild branches that have been grafted into the olive tree', contrary to nature, by receiving the gospel of sonship and embracing their unique participation in the offering and the sufferings of Christ.

The grafting of the Gentiles into the olive tree demonstrated the mercy of God that was extended to all nations through the offering of Christ.

Paul also clearly warned all Gentile believers to not presume upon this mercy of the Lord.

'You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in". Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty [or do not be wise in your own mind], but fear.'

That is, maintain the fear of the Lord before your eyes by continuing to respond to His word, and by meeting Him face to face, eye to eye, heart to heart. 'Do not be haughty, but fear.'

'For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.' Rom 11:19-21.

### **Idolatry in the Jewish believers**

It is easy for us to identify the idolatry that was in the hearts of the Jewish believers in the early church, who were zealous for keeping the Law.

This led to the trampling of the apostle Paul when he came back down to Jerusalem and to the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem in AD70.

It is easy to identify that principle. However, it is vitally important that we also recognise that by the time the temple and the city of Jerusalem were destroyed in AD70, a different form of idolatry, or 'abomination standing in the holy place', had already begun, and was well established in the Gentile church.

### **Gentile churches embrace Greek philosophy**

The Gentile church, and most notably the Ephesian elders, where Paul had spent so much time establishing the administration of lampstand churches had turned their back on the gospel of sonship proclaimed by Paul, to embrace Greek philosophy.

The first evidence that they had exchanged the truth of God for a lie was their willingness to replace the fellowship of the *agape* meal with a *sacramental eucharist*. We know that this happened very quickly.

It is important to recognise that the impact of *Greek philosophy* on the Gentile church is an even bigger issue, in many ways, than the impact of the religious zealots in the Jerusalem church.

It has caused the gospel of sonship to be maligned, and the messengers of Christ to be trampled for almost 2000 years. This is why the period of delay in the Seventy Weeks prophecy is called an 'overspreading of abominations'.

The abominations began as soon as the Jews sewed up the veil in the temple and continued to make animal sacrifice. But when that animal sacrifice, or that form of abomination, came to an end, when the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in AD70, this other form of abomination, or idolatry, had already taken over.

It continues right down to our present day. One thing is certain, the Lord will bring this all to judgement. Hence, the apostle Paul admonished the Gentile believers in every place and in every generation by saying, 'Therefore, consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness.' Rom 11:22.

We continue in the Lord's goodness by continuing to receive His word; by responding to His word by turning and meeting Christ eye to eye and heart to heart; and by embracing the unique participation that He has given us in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings.

'If you continue in His goodness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.'

Having warned the Gentile believers, Paul then returned to his consideration of the Jewish people.

'And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut out [speaking to the Gentiles] of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?' Rom 11:23-24.

Paul compared 'the natural branches' - the Jews - with the Gentiles, who are 'wild olive branches'.

He is saying that if God was willing to cut off the natural branches, how much more readily will He cut off the wild olive branches if they do not continue in faith and the goodness of the Lord.

He is also saying that, if the Lord has grafted in the Gentiles as wild olive branches into the olive tree, how much more readily will He regraft the Jews as the natural branches into that olive tree, which is the kingdom of God.

### **The mystery of Jew and Gentile in one body**

'For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery; lest you should be wise in your own opinion [that is, 'haughty'], that blindness in part has happened to Israel [the 'Israel' of his day; the Jews] until the fullness of the Gentiles [or the nations] has come in.' Rom 11:25.

When Paul said, 'I don't want you to be ignorant of this mystery', he was referring to the mystery of Jew and Gentile in one body. He was speaking about this mystery when he said to the Ephesians, 'If indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God.' Eph 3:2.

We have been considering that the period of delay is a dispensation of grace so that everything that Christ has accomplished 'for' us can be accomplished 'in' us as we participate in the fellowship of His offering.

It is also a dispensation of grace for the sake of gathering Jew and Gentile into one body, in the fellowship of Christ's offering.

'If indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you [speaking to the Gentiles], how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.' Eph 3:2-4.

When Paul said that he had already written about this mystery briefly, it is possible that he was referring to an earlier letter or piece of writing. But it is also likely that he was referring to what he already said in his letter to the Ephesians.

We read this in our previous session at the end of Chapter 2, concerning Jew and Gentile in one body, where he said that Christ has destroyed the

middle wall of separation and reconciled both Jew and Gentile to God in His physical body, through His offering on the cross.

Paul had already clearly stated the mystery, even though he did it very briefly.

In Ephesians Chapter 3 he said, 'Which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets.

'That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs [with the Jews] of the same body [the body of Christ] and partakers of His promise [the blessing of Abraham; the promise of the Spirit] in Christ through the gospel.' Eph 3:5-6.

When Paul used the term 'mystery', he was not referring to something that is mysterious. The term 'mystery' in the Scriptures simply refers to a foundational truth, or reality, that cannot be understood by natural means. It needs to be revealed to us by the Spirit. It can only be understood by illumination.

It is noteworthy that Paul said that he does not want any believer to be ignorant of this mystery; that is, Jew and Gentile in one body. If we do not understand this mystery, it invariably leads to the false assumption that there is a separate prophetic destiny for the Jews and a separate prophetic destiny for the Gentiles.

This is not true - there will be Jew and Gentile in one body.

We know that, since the time of the apostle Paul, the Lord's focus has been the proclamation of the gospel to all the Gentile nations through the ministry of lampstand churches.

### **Blindness of the Jews**

There will come a time when a multitude of Jews will turn again to the Lord. The veil that has covered their eyes will be removed, and they will return to find their place in the kingdom of God in heavenly places. That is, they will be regrafted into the olive tree.

Paul said that 'blindness in part' has happened to Israel, or the Jews, until the fullness of the Gentiles, or of the nations, has come in.

The judgement of blindness was invoked upon the Jewish nation because of their unbelief. It is not only that they were broken off from the olive

tree. The judgement of 'blindness' was invoked upon them because they rejected the word of Christ.

We recall that Christ came as the Messenger of the covenant. He bore bearing witness to the Everlasting Covenant, which is the covenant of sonship, by water and by blood and by the Spirit.

Remarkably, it was Jesus Himself who invoked the judgement of blindness upon the nation of Israel, the Jews, by proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom to them – which is the gospel of sonship – during the three and a half years of His earthly ministry.

When Jesus finished the parable of the sower – which is the foremost, or the most foundational, of all the parables – the disciples asked Him, 'Why do You speak to the crowd in parables?'

Jesus responded by saying, 'I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which saying: Hearing you will not hear and shall not understand and seeing you will see, and not perceive.' Mat 13:13-14.

### **Response to the word preached**

When Christ preached the word during His earthly ministry, it was accompanied with *prevenient grace*, so that every person had the opportunity and the accountability to receive or to reject His word.

Those who received His word received the blessing of *illumination*.

He said to the disciples, 'Blessed are your eyes because they see.' They had the opportunity to receive this blessing of illumination.

However, those who hardened their hearts by rejecting His word drew back to their unbelief, and the judgement of blindness was invoked upon them.

In this regard, their condition after the word was proclaimed to them and they rejected it was worse than their condition prior to the word being proclaimed to them.

This is true for all of us. When the word is preached, if we withdraw to unbelief, if we harden our heart, at the end of that interaction,

our heart will be harder than what it was prior to the word being proclaimed to us.

It is important to recognise that it is not possible to make a 'neutral' response to the word when it is proclaimed to us. We either receive it and respond to it; or we reject it.

The idea that we can simply be ambivalent to the word, and it simply has no impact upon us is itself a great deception.

The prophet Isaiah declared that the word is proclaimed to us to give us rest and refreshing when we turn to meet Christ and embrace our unique participation in the fellowship of His offering.

That is the very same word that causes us to go backward to be broken, snared, and caught, if we do not believe and obey it.

### **Jew and Gentile in one body**

We know that there were many Jews who, in the early church, did turn to the Lord so that the veil of the Old Covenant was removed from their eyes.

The apostle Paul is the most obvious example of someone who was previously a religious zealot. The Lord confronted him, and he turned to the Lord and became a follower of Christ.

We know that there were many other Jews who did likewise; many who did respond to the word that was preached by the apostle Paul.

Aquila and his wife Priscilla pulled Apollos aside – Apollos was also a Jew – and taught him the way of God 'more accurately'. Apollos was a mighty man in the Scriptures, and he reasoned with many of the Jews, demonstrating from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

There were many Jews who believed. However, most of the Jews rejected the gospel.

'But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains un-lifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ [taken away only in Christ]. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.'

This continues right down to our current day. Then he said, 'Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.' 2Co 3:14-16.

### **The fullness of the Gentiles**

Paul was clear that this veil will remain on the eyes of the Jewish people until the time when the fullness of the Gentiles, or the fullness of the nations, comes into the kingdom of God.

When Paul used the term, 'the fullness of the Gentiles', or 'the fullness of the nations', he did so in a very specific way. It is not just a poetic way of saying that many Gentiles will come into the kingdom of God. The term, 'the fullness of the nations', or 'the fullness of the Gentiles', is a direct quote from the prophecy of Jacob concerning his grandson Ephraim.

We recall that Joseph married an Egyptian woman, and then had two sons. The eldest son was Manasseh and the second was Ephraim, which means 'double fruit'.

Joseph called him Ephraim because God had caused him to be fruitful in the land of his affliction. It is a significant name.

Jacob had, by this time, also come down to Egypt with his family and settled in the land of Goshen when he was close to death and very sick. Joseph brought his sons to see their grandfather so that he could bless them.

Jacob effectively adopted Manasseh and Ephraim and considered them to be among his own sons, so that they are numbered among the patriarchs and fathers of Israel.

You will remember that Joseph brought his two sons near to Jacob and he brought Manasseh so that he was closest to Jacob's right hand.

He brought Ephraim so that he was closest to Jacob's left hand, because Manasseh was the older - the firstborn - and Ephraim was the younger.

Even though Jacob could no longer see, the Scripture says that he knowingly crossed his hands and placed his right hand on the head of Ephraim. When Joseph saw this, he assumed that there was a misunderstanding, and he went to correct his father and remove his right hand from the head of Ephraim, to place it on the head of Manasseh.

But Jacob said to him, 'I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people [speaking of Manasseh], and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and

his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.' Gen 48:19.

The literal translation of that phrase is 'His seed shall become the fullness of the nations'. This refers to the seed of Ephraim.

When Paul spoke about the time when the fullness of the nations will come in, he was referring to the fulfilment of the prophecy of Jacob concerning the seed of Ephraim.

To understand the use of this phrase, it is necessary to briefly comment on the history of the nation of Israel.

### **Dividing of Israel and Judah**

We know that King David reigned over the whole kingdom of Israel, over the whole house of Israel; and Solomon also reigned over the whole kingdom. However, in the days of David's grandson, Rehoboam, the kingdom was divided, and the ten northern tribes were split and were given to Jeroboam.

The ten northern tribes were split from Judah and became known as 'Israel', under the leadership of the tribe of Ephraim. Jeroboam was from the tribe of Ephraim.

When they split from Judah, Jeroboam made two golden calves, and said to the people, 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold your gods. And these are the gods who brought you up out of Egypt. And he put one calf in Bethel, and he put one calf up in the region of Dan. And he made houses on the high places, and he made priests from among the people, whoever he chose.' IKi 12:28-29.

He even made himself to be a priest. But every sacrifice that was made, and all the incense that was burnt on these high places, was an abomination to the Lord. The Scripture refers to this as 'the sin of the high place'.

The Lord's anger was kindled against Israel because of this. Ultimately, He delivered them into the hands of the Assyrians, who were the second world kingdom.

Remember, Egypt was the first world kingdom. Assyria was the second world kingdom. And the final conquest of the northern kingdom of Israel - the ten northern tribes - by the Assyrians happened during the lifetime of the prophet

Isaiah, and during the reign of King Hezekiah in the southern kingdom of Judah.

It was well over a hundred years that the ten northern tribes were conquered by the Assyrians, before the southern kingdom of Judah was taken into captivity by the Babylonians, who were the third world kingdom.

### **Ten northern tribes among the nations**

When the Assyrians conquered the house of Israel, they completely assimilated them among the nations – and this is an important point – and replaced them in the land of Samaria with people from many foreign lands.

This was a deliberate strategy employed by the Assyrians. They did not leave the people whom they conquered in place, because they didn't want to risk a future uprising. They 'displanted' them all.

They shifted them to other places and replaced them with people from foreign lands. Their goal was to destroy any sense of national coherence or identity among the people. They scattered the nations that they conquered so that the people lost all sense of national identity.

For this reason, the ten northern tribes, which are sometimes called 'the ten lost tribes of Israel', are no longer a definable or distinguishable group of people in the world. Some have tried to link the ten northern tribes with certain modern nations.

The most popular, of course, is trying to link them with Britain. That is in the hope of transferring the historic promises made to Israel to a modern nation. However, there is no scriptural, historical or anthropological evidence or reason to do this.

In fact, the Scripture is very clear that the ten northern tribes have been scattered and dispersed among all the nations of the world.

We read in the book of Amos, "Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are on the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth; yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob", says the Lord [speaking about the ten northern tribes], "For surely I will command and will sift the house of Israel [10 northern tribes] among all nations, as grain is sifted in a sieve; yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground".' Amo 9:8-9.

He was saying that He scattered them among all the nations, and this was by His command. This was a judgement upon them.

Among those nations there will be a threshing, or a sifting, process, and He will recover a remnant of the ten northern tribes. However, they will only be recovered in the fullness of the nations, as the fullness of the nations comes in to the kingdom of God.

The northern tribes will never again be regathered as a definable national grouping of people, but they are regathered as the fullness of the Gentiles in fulfilment of the prophecy of Jacob concerning Ephraim.

This is an important point, because all of the prophecies concerning the restoration of the northern tribes of Israel will be fulfilled in the gathering of the fullness of the Gentiles in the time of the end.

### **Recovery of the northern tribes**

The apostle Paul proclaimed, concerning the recovery of the northern tribes of Israel, 'And He says also in Hosea [Hosea had a very specific and unique ministry concerning the ten northern tribes of Israel]: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, "You are not My people [when they're scattered among the nations]", there they shall be called sons of the living God.'

So there will be a 'harvest' of sons of God.

'Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved".' Rom 9:25-27.

It is interesting that, at the end of the book of Hosea, he said, concerning the recovery of Ephraim in the fullness of the nations, 'I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from him. His branches shall spread; His beauty shall be like an olive tree.' Hos 14:4-6.

This refers to how they are grafted in, in the fullness of the nations, as part of the wild olive branches. 'His beauty shall be like an olive tree'. We see this as a very integrated picture in the Scriptures.

'For He will finish the work [this is the Lord gathering Jew and Gentile into one body - He will finish the work] and cut it short.' Rom 9:28.

We can connect this to 'unless the days were cut short', the words of Jesus. 'For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth.'

A key point is that, in the time of the end, the Lord will finish the work of recovering the remnant of Israel by bringing the fullness of the nations into the kingdom of God.

### **The Father takes His seat**

The time of the end will commence when the Father, as the Ancient of Days, takes His seat. Then Jesus Christ, who is presently seated in the throne of the Father will stand up with His administration to receive and possess a kingdom for the sake of delivering that kingdom to the Father.

The time of the end will commence after the Father has taken His seat as the Ancient of Days and Christ has stood up with His administration to open the seven-sealed book which contains the full revelation of the Father's will.

### **The first seal**

When the first seal is opened, the messengers in the right hand of Christ will proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to all nations, and in all nations.

The fruit of their ministry will be the ingathering of the fullness of the nations. However, we need to go further with this.

When the fullness of the nations comes into the kingdom of God, including the remnant of the ten northern tribes, the Lord will also 'open a fountain for the house of David' and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that a great multitude of the Jews will turn and look upon Him whom they've pierced.

This is 'Jew and Gentile in one body'. This means that the veil that has covered the eyes of many of the Jewish people for two thousand years will be removed as they meet Christ eye to eye, and heart to heart.

Remarkably, the prophet Zechariah identified that the Lord will recover one third of the Jewish people. We know that this focuses on Jerusalem and that region, but it also includes the Jews in every synagogue, in every place throughout the

world. This is a huge revival, a huge harvest from among the Jewish people.

### **Key verse**

Returning to our key verse, the apostle Paul was referring to both the recovery of the remnant of Israel in the fullness of the nations, and this mighty revival among the Jewish people.

'For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel [the Jews] until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.'

On this basis, he then declared in the very next verse, 'And so all Israel will be saved.' Rom 11:25.

When he said, 'all Israel', he was referring to this final gathering of Jew and Gentile into the one kingdom of God in the time of the end. This is 'a great multitude which no man can number from every nation, tribe, people and tongue'.

In our next session, we will look a little further at how this happens in the time of the end.