

## ROMANS 11:25

In this verse, Paul tells Gentile believers they should not be ignorant of God's plan for Israel which, if they are ignorant, can lead to arrogant attitudes and unbiblical understanding. Paul reveals when Israel's partial blindness will be removed and explains the mystery of the "fulness of the Gentiles."

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.***

**"For"** γάρ gar "a primary particle; properly, assigning a reason (used in argument, explanation or intensification; often with other particles):--and, as, because (that), but, even, for, indeed, no doubt, seeing, then, therefore, verily, what, why, yet." Strong's Concordance

"It serves to explain, make clear, illustrate, a preceding thought or word: for equivalent to that is, namely." Thayer's Greek Lexicon, part III

In the 20 verses from Romans 11:13 - 32, ten of them start with the particle "For." In the verses preceding verse 25 (and 27) God has warned the Gentiles against being arrogant against Israel (the Jewish people) and that God can graft the natural branches that were cut off (unbelieving Israel) back into the olive tree. The use of "For," "serves to explain, make clear, illustrate, a preceding thought or word."

What is **"for"** emphasizing? Gentile believers are warned not to be **"ignorant of this mystery"** because (**for**) they would become **"wise in their own conceits,"** or, as they were warned earlier, don't be boastfulness against the branches (Israel/Jewish people), or highminded (arrogant) concerning Israel.

What is the mystery that Gentiles are not to be ignorant about?

The mystery is NOT that **"that blindness in part is happened to Israel."**

The entire nation is not blind, only part of the nation. And, the blindness was brought upon themselves by their sinful rebelliousness - see the lesson on Romans 11:6-10. As we have seen earlier there are a remnant of Jews who believe and the rest tried to attain favor with God through the works of the law, and were blind(ed) to the truth that favor with God is by grace through faith.

The mystery is that the blindness, in part, will last **"until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."**

The blindness on Israel lasts **"until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."**

What does the phrase **"UNTIL the fulness of the Gentiles be come in"** refer to?

There is confusion and disagreement on what **"until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in"** refers to.

Dr. Charles Feinberg summarizes the various viewpoints as follows: "Sanday and Headlam maintain that *plhrwma* [fulness] refers to the Gentile world as a whole. Griffith Thomas refers the time to the close of the Gentile dispensation. Faber, Stifler, Brookes, and Chalmers are all of the opinion that the time referred to is identical with 'the times of the Gentiles.' Godet, after denoting the fulness of the Gentiles as the totality of the Gentile nations, designates the time as 'the times of the Gentiles.' Bosworth contends that reference is made to the large majority of the Gentile population of the world, while Govett thinks the phrase refers to the elect of this dispensation out of all nations. Moule holds that εἰσερχομαι ('be come in') refers to a time when the ingathering of the Gentile children of God will be not at an end, but running high."

*The Mystery of Israel's Blindness*, unpublished thesis filed in the Dallas Theological Seminary Library, pp. 69-70.

### 1. The traditional view

"When the two concepts, the times of the Gentiles and the fullness of the Gentiles are compared, it becomes evident that the times of the Gentiles is primarily a political term and has to do with the political overlordship of Jerusalem. By contrast, the term the fullness of the Gentiles refers to the present age in which Gentiles predominate in the church and far exceed Israel in present spiritual blessing. It becomes clear, therefore, that, while the two concepts may be contemporaneous at least for much of their fulfillment, the termini of the two periods are somewhat different. The times of the Gentiles will end only when Israel will permanently gain political control of Jerusalem at the second advent of Christ, whereas the fullness of the Gentiles will be completed when God's present task of winning Jew and Gentile to Christ is completed.

Dr. John Walvoord, "The Times of the Gentiles". *Bibl Sac Vol* 125. Issue 497. Page 9, 1968

## 2. A growing view

"The...view held by a growing number of Messianic and other evangelical believers sees the fullness of the Gentiles as referring to the faithfulness of the Gentile believers. In Romans 11:12 how much more their [Israel's] fullness? the word fullness has to do with the completion of Israel's calling, as opposed to their transgression and failure to do God's will (vv. 12,30). Thus the fullness of the Gentiles means Gentile believers will be faithful to fulfill their calling toward Israel: to make Israel jealous."

Sam Nadler, *The Fullness of the Gentiles: What it Really Means*,  
<http://messianicassociation.org/ezine16-sn.fullness.htm>

## 3. Another possible view (based on the context of the preceding verses)

- 1) Israel was preventing the gospel from going to the Gentiles.

*"Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."* 1 Thessalonians 2:16

- 2) The blindness upon Israel is national, as Israel was "set aside" in 70 A.D. nationally, and God started using the church in His plan. There were saved and unsaved in the nation of Israel.
- 3) Israel was set aside so the gospel would go to the Gentiles.

*"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."* Romans 11:11

*"For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief."* Romans 11:30

- 4) The church (represented by the predominately Gentile make-up of the church) were, then, to "provoke to jealousy" Jews by sharing the gospel with them, 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."* Romans 11:11

- 5) The church did not witness to the Jewish people because of their "high-mindedness," Romans 11:18-20.

Much of this "high-mindedness" can be attributed to replacement theology.

"Beloved, the church needs to remember that God is not finished with Israel. Anyone who teaches that is conceited and lacks understanding of the mystery in this passage! Replacement theology is such an aberrant conceited understanding, in which the basic premise is propounded that God is finished with Israel because the Church is now the Israel of God!" [http://www.preceptaustin.org/romans\\_1117-33](http://www.preceptaustin.org/romans_1117-33)

What has occurred is that, like the Jews who forbade the gospel to go to Gentiles, the church has forbade (at best, neglected) the gospel to go to the Jews. Consider the command of Romans 1:16.

*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."*

- 6) The "**mystery**" is "**that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.**" The mystery concerns national Israel coming to the Lord when the fullness of the Gentiles (in context representing the Gentile portion of the church) comes in.
- 7) The "**fulness of the Gentile**" is when their (the predominately Gentile made up church) disobedience has reached its pinnacle in not sharing the gospel with the Jewish people and God removes them from the earth (via the rapture) and returns to working through Israel. This is why Paul emphasizes the need to reach the Jewish people in Romans 11:12-15.

John Wilkinson, *Israel My Glory*, (London: Mildmay Mission to the Jews, New and Revised Edition, 1921), page 162 says:

"It is a mistake to suppose that the Divine order "*to the Jew first*" has ever been annulled or reversed. "*To the Jew first*" as an individual in this dispensation, and as a nation in the millennial era, is God's plan; and the neglect of this order has been followed by disastrous results. Indeed, **it is probable that the neglect of this Divine order, the culpable neglect by the Church of Christ will be the secondary cause for closing this dispensation in corruption and judgment.** The Church ought to have observed this order all through this dispensation, but has failed; the Lord Himself will see that this arrangement is carried out on His return to bless the world." Bold added

Ken Symes, "*The Fulness of the Gentiles*," *Israel's Messenger*, Summer, 2018 writes:

"So, the phrase "*The fullness of the Gentiles*" is not predicting a number in God's mind of Gentile conversions that, when reached, will cause Him to rapture away the Church. Nor does it speak of a Gentile Church Age. This phrase speaks of the time when the institutional church will have reached the pinnacle of their failure of not sharing the Gospel with Jewish people which will result in God removing the true believing church (the rapture) in preparation for His final Judgment of the unbelieving world."

8) In Summary

**ROMANS 11:1-11**

Israel rejected the gospel as only a remnant believed and the rest of the nation were blind to the truth because of their sinful embrace of a works salvation..

**ROMANS 11:12-15**

Israel's being set aside by God was so Gentiles could be saved and, in return, God commanded the Gentiles to take the gospel back to the Jewish people, so ultimately, the entire world would be blessed (Genesis 12:3; Romans 1:16).

**ROMANS 11:16-24**

The church (predominately Gentiles) is told that the root is holy (the Abrahamic Covenant) and the branches are then holy (Israel) and if the church becomes proud and arrogant, not sharing the gospel with the Jewish people, God can and will cut them off just like He did to Israel, in order for Him to bless the world.

**ROMANS 11:25-27**

When the "fullness" of the churches disobedience to bring the gospel to the Jewish people has reached its pinnacle God will remove the church (in the rapture) and go back to working through Israel with many Jewish people being saved, ultimately all Israel, so the world might receive the fullness of blessing God promised.

The context of the "fulness of the Gentiles" is that they didn't heed the warning of being arrogant and conceited and so they "missed" God's plan, and established their own.

9) The termini of "*the fulness of the Gentiles*" is the same with the *Traditional View* (1) and *Another Possible View* (3), both seeing the termini as the rapture of the church. But, the catalyst for "*the fulness of the Gentiles*" is different. The *Traditional View* sees the catalyst as being the last person saved during the church age and then the rapture. *Another Possible View* sees the catalyst as the churches disobedience in not witnessing to Jewish people (Romans 1:16 and 11:11, 30-31) and God, as He did with disobedient Israel, removes the church and continues His plan with Israel. This view lines up with the preceding verses, where the "traditional view," as explained by Walvoord - "the fullness of the Gentiles will be completed when God's present task of winning Jew and Gentile to Christ is completed" - has no basis in light of the preceding verses.