

# PENTECOST & PAROUSIA

## 5. ISRAEL; CHURCH & KINGDOM

# THE GOSPEL TO THE NATIONS

- The earthly ministry of Jesus was to Israel. “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (Matt. 15: 24).
- It is only after the resurrection of Jesus that the disciples are sent to the Gentiles: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations“ (Matt. 28: 19).

# ON THE CROSS JESUS DESTROYED THE POWER OF SIN, DEATH, & SATAN

“He has made us alive together with Him [Jesus], having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.” (Col. 2: 13 - 15).

Jesus has put an end to God's requirement that the Israelites separate themselves from the Gentiles. That period of God's schooling is over for the Jewish people.

This breaking down the barriers was symbolized in the tearing of the veil separating the holy place from the holy of holies (Matt. 27: 51; Heb. 6: 19; 10: 20). All made holy by the death of Jesus now have direct access to the Father.

# CHURCH, SIGN OF THE KINGDOM

Jesus is enthroned in heaven, but not yet on earth.

Acts 2: 36: “God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ [Messiah].”

We come under the reign of Jesus as we believe in Him, are baptized, receive the Holy Spirit, and obey His commandments.

The Church is the assembly of those who accept Jesus as Lord, and receive the Holy Spirit, to make present in a hidden way the Kingdom on earth.

# FROM JERUSALEM TO THE END OF THE EARTH

- The Book of Acts starts in Jerusalem and ends in Rome. This is deliberate.
- From Chapter 13, apart from the Council in Jerusalem (Acts 15) the narrative concerns Paul, the apostle to the nations.
- Does it anticipate the big dispersion of the Jewish people and the destruction of Jerusalem?

# VIA SAMARIA TO THE GENTILES

- The Gospel comes to Samaria (Acts 8).
- Then comes the conversion and call of Saul of Tarsus, later the apostle, Paul.
- Then the gospel coming to God-fearers among the Gentiles, Cornelius & household in Caesarea.
- Finally, the Gospel comes to pagans without any relationship to Israel: this happens in Antioch (Acts 11: 19 - 21).

# THE BIG DEBATE

- **Do the Gentiles have to be circumcised to be saved? I.e. do they have to convert to Judaism?**
- **NO**
- **Do the Jewish disciples stop being Jews? This question is not asked, because nobody doubted.**
- **NO**



# CHURCH OF ONE NEW MAN

- This decision in Jerusalem (Acts 15) enabled Paul to formulate his theology of the church in Eph. 2 - 3.
- We may call it the Church of the ONE NEW MAN, Jew and Gentile united in their distinctiveness, made one through the cross, which destroyed their hostility. (Eph. 2: 14 - 16).

# ISRAEL DIVIDED

See prophecy of Simeon: Luke 2: 34.

Israel is divided between the Jews who accept Jesus and the Jews who reject Him.

Both remain part of the chosen people.

# CHURCH DIVIDED

The first division in the Church appears when the Church by now almost entirely Gentile no longer welcomes a Church from the Jews.

In Romans 11, Paul warns three times against the arrogance of the Gentiles:

Rom 11: 18: do not boast against the branches ... you do not support the root, but the root supports you.”

Rom. 11: 20, 25.

# MORE & MORE DIVISION

This rebuilding of the wall between Gentiles and Jews is at the root of all subsequent divisions in the Church.

One pattern is repeated: the newcomers, the latest movement, rejects the older, and thinks itself superior.

Protestant churches: we have the Gospel

Pentecostal churches: we have the Holy Spirit

# 20th Century

In the last 120 years:

Rise of Ecumenical Movement (1910)

recognizing sin of division

Return of Jews to the land of Israel (1947,  
1967)

Rise of Messianic Jewish movement (from 1967)

Outpouring of Holy Spirit across all church  
boundaries

# RESTORATION OF MESSIANIC HOPE

The Jewish people are the bearers of the Messianic promises. See Rom. 9: 5.

When Jews come to faith in Yeshua (Jesus), they know their return to the land of Israel is a sign of the nearness of the Lord's coming.

At the same time, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit awakens the hope of the Lord's coming among Christians, and opens their eyes to the Scriptures.

# ROMANS 11

Through the Jews' unbelief, salvation came to the Gentiles (Rom. 11: 11).

Paul prophesies great blessings for all when the Jews accept Jesus: the **fullness** of Israel (11: 12).

Their acceptance will be life from the dead“ (11: 15).

Hardness came upon a part of Israel for a time; this will end. “until the **fullness** of the Gantiles.” (11. 26). And so all Israel will be saved.

# MYSTERY

For Paul, this is all a mystery (11: 25). This means it is a part of God's plan, an expression of God's wisdom. So we must not have the arrogance to set ourselves up over history and pass judgments on the Jews.

We are within this mystery. We are seeing it unfolding, even though we only understand a little.



What began as a big puzzle for Paul, that caused him great anguish (Rom. 9: 2), ends with revelation from God: “For God has committed them all [Jew and Gentile] to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.”

So he ends with a great shout of praise: (11: 33)  
“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and understanding of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out.”

# GATHERING ALL INTO ONE

In Ephesians, Paul explains the mystery thus: “in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things [under one head] in Christ, both which are in heaven and with are on earth in Him.” (Eph. 1: 10).

The Greek verb used expresses resume, sum up, reunite and bring under one head.

In this Israel plays a key role - see Eph. 2 - 3.

# POPE FRANCIS

New emphasis on the Holy Spirit.

On **newness** of the Holy Spirit.

On **creativity** of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit creates an **immense diversity**.

In our sinful condition, we don't like the diversity; we reject those who are very different.

So Francis speaks of **reconciled diversity**

All authentic unity is reconciled diversity.

Example of marriage: normal school for unity!

Prototype in difference between Jews and Gentiles.

Here there has been the greatest hatred.

Here there is God's model of reconciliation for salvation: the Church of the one new man preparing the vision of Rev 7 and the new Jerusalem of Rev. 21 - 22.