

“ISRAEL MY GLORY”

Israel’s Mission, and Missions to Israel

by

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CHAPTER TEN

THE MISTAKES OF MANY CHRISTIANS CONCERNING JEWS STATED AND CORRECTED

PREJUDICE is blinding. We readily assent to this in the case of the Jew. The Jew has been, and to a large extent is still, prejudiced against Christ and Christianity, and that prejudice blinds. Many Christians are still prejudiced against the Jews and are to the same extent blinded. Hence, in the case of the Jew, the Scriptures which relate to the Messiahship of Jesus are misinterpreted under the blindness of prejudice; and in the case of the Christian, the Scriptures which relate to the Jew are misinterpreted under the same blinding influence.

It is a mistake to suppose that *national rejection*, which is but *temporary*, and which affects necessarily only *temporal interests*, has imperiled individual salvation. This point has been referred to at length in our third chapter, so needs no more than a passing remark here. Paul, by the Holy Ghost, says, distinctly “**Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin**” (Romans 11:1).

This is confirmed by the plain statement in Romans 10:12-15, which has been already noticed, that with God “**there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek,**” &c. And further confirmed by Romans 1:16, where the Gospel is declared to be “**the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first.**”

Then if the national rejection of the Jew has not imperiled his individual salvation, it has always been, and is now, the imperative duty of the Christian Church to preach to him the Gospel. Had she done so from apostolic times, she might have witnessed apostolic results.

Further, it is a mistake to suppose that the guilt incurred in the crucifixion of Jesus hinders Jewish conversion. How frequently have hard thoughts been suggested, and hard words uttered by even Christian ministers and commentators when quoting the imprecation: “**His blood be on us, and on our children**” (Matthew 27:25).

Now we readily admit that judgment came on the *nation* as the result of rejecting Jesus as the Messiah; and it must be admitted further that individual Jews rejecting Jesus as Saviour necessarily died in their sins, for Jesus said, “**If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.**”

And Jesus further said to the **“Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! . . . Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers . . . that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zachariah, son of Barachias . . . Verily, I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation”** (Ch. 23:29, 36).

Now it must be admitted from the above passages, that the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus not only affected the national and temporal interests of the Jews, turning the nation out of Palestine and scattering them among the Gentiles during **“the times of the Gentiles,”** but that the deliberate rejection of Jesus as Saviour affected the spiritual and eternal interests of multitudes of individual Jews then as the same conduct in Jews and Gentiles does now. But when we consider that tens of thousands of Jews of that same generation were truly converted after the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus, we are justified in maintaining, that the spiritual and eternal interests of the people as a whole were not unfavorably affected by the people’s imprecation, **“His blood be on us, and: on our children.”**

In the first place it was a *wicked prayer* offered by *wicked men*.

What does God say of such prayers. **“The desire of the wicked shall perish.” “The prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.”** Admitting, however, that for purposes of retribution God does permit imprecations to fall on the heads of the wicked themselves, He does not permit the wicked to dispose of the spiritual and eternal interests of their children. If imprecations on others were to be answered, the Romanists would have made short work of the whole Protestant world before now; and even drunkards would barter the eternal interests of their children for the intoxicating cup.

How few care to inquire into the amount of guilt incurred by the Jews in crucifying the Lord Jesus. They crucified knowingly a *man*. They crucified knowingly an *innocent* man, for our Lord could challenge the nation: **“Which of you convinceth me of sin.”** They crucified knowingly, not only a man, an innocent man, but also a Divine Messenger, as His works testified. But they did not crucify knowingly **“the Lord of Glory,”** for we are distinctly told by Paul that **“We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery . . . Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory”** (I Corinthians 2:8).

Peter also, addressing the Jews in Solomon’s porch of the Temple, says, **“And now, brethren, I wot (know) that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers”** (Acts 3:17).

Paul bears similar testimony in his sermon to the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia: **“For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him”** (Acts 13:27).

It must also be remembered that our Lord’s prayer on the Cross for His crucifiers was based on their ignorance of what they were doing: **“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”** (Luke 23:34).

Now this was a definite prayer of our Blessed Lord to His Father on behalf of His murderers, and either was answered, or it was not. If not answered, the Father did not hear Him always; and our Blessed Lord on another occasion said “**I knew that Thou hearest me *always*.**” If answered, then the answer neutralized the imprecation.

It is also interesting to inquire why our Lord uttered *aloud* that prayer on the Cross.

He might have wished or willed forgiveness in silence, and the Father would have heard Him and answered. We get a clue to the reason in the context of the passage quoted above. Let us quote it in full. “**And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me**” (John 11:42).

Jesus did not simply wish at the tomb of Lazarus, but said, or spake aloud, that those who heard might believe Him to be the sent of God. Will not this help us to understand why Jesus prayed aloud on the Cross? He knew that in the course of a few days, under the influences of Pentecost, their ignorance would give place to light and conviction, and lest His crucifiers should, in despair, like Judas, hang themselves, they were permitted to remember that in the agony of death He prayed “**Father, forgive them.**”

They were thus encouraged to seek forgiveness of the sin of crucifying Jesus, and of every other sin besides; and they got it, for when He pardons, He abundantly pardons. The sin of crucifying Jesus was a sin, and a great sin, but it was not the sin of the Jews. The *sin* of the Jews then, as now, is the *sin* of the Gentile also—rejecting salvation through the blood after the blood was shed. The rejection of salvation, bought at infinite cost, and offered to the sinner without money and without price, pains the heart of Christ more than the pain of body and mind together experienced in the crucifixion itself.

Thus we regard it as a mistake to suppose that the imprecation uttered nearly 2000 years ago has unfavorably affected the spiritual interests of untold millions of Jews in subsequent generations.

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.

It is a mistake to suppose that the veil on the Jewish heart is judicial blindness for rejecting Jesus eighteen hundred years ago, and that the veil must be removed in order to render conversion possible. But how can we reconcile the doctrine of a judicial blindness inflicted on the Jewish nation all these centuries for crucifying Jesus, with the fact that thousands upon thousands of Jews were converted after the crucifixion, and it was through the crucifixion itself that they obtained the forgiveness of their sins?

What have the Jews done as a people since apostolic times to render their conversion less practicable now than then? If they could be, and were, converted by thousands then, why not now? God says, “**There is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him: for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved**” (Romans 10:12, 13).

God says with Him there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—He is as able and willing to save the one as the other. Can the Christian Church say that she has made no difference in her prayerful and practical efforts? The responsibility of the results of that difference lies heavily on the Church of Christ to-day.

The Jewish *nation*, it may willingly be admitted, is under God’s ban, or the people would not be out of Palestine, but would be at home in their own land. But national ban affects only temporal interests. The spiritual interests of the individual Jew have not been affected necessarily by the national rejection and dispersion. As to their spiritual interests as individuals, Paul says, “**God hath not cast away his people . . . for I also am an Israelite.**”

There is no vail, affecting spiritual interests, spread over the Jewish people in all ages on account of the conduct of their forefathers eighteen centuries ago.

If there were such a vail, the death of Christ would, in their case at least, work more for destruction than make for salvation, and would illustrate the doctrine of unconditional reprobation on a fearful scale.

Nevertheless the Scripture speaks of vails. How are they explained?

There are *four* vails on the mind of the Jew, but none that interferes at all with the doctrine of perfect equality between Jew and Gentile under the present dispensation, as expressed in Romans 10:12, “**There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek.**”

- Vail 1, is ignorance;
- Vail 2, prejudice;
- Vail 3, that which has obscured and still obscures the typical character of the Levitical economy; and
- Vail 4, that which is the consequence of unbelief.

1st, *Ignorance.*

Romans 10:3 speaks of the Jews as “**being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own.**”

How is this vail to be removed? Impart correct information on any matter of which any people are ignorant, and the vail is at once removed; in other words, “**preach the Gospel to every creature,**” and in exact proportion as this is done the vail of ignorance is removed.

Are not the Gentiles under a Similar Vail?

See Ephesians 4, where Paul speaks of Gentiles walking “**in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them;**” and then speaks of such Gentiles as “**past feeling,**” and as working “**all uncleanness with greediness.**” Surely if there be a difference at all between Jew and Gentile it is not against the Jew, as far as the vail of ignorance is concerned.

2nd, Prejudice.

The carnal mind is enmity against God in the case of both Jew and Gentile. But some say the Jews are more prejudiced against the Gospel than are the Gentiles. Are not the heathen, the Mohammedans, and even nominal Christians—as Roman and Greek Catholics —prejudiced against the simple and pure Gospel?

Even granting that some Jews are more prejudiced against the Gospel than are some Gentiles, is there not an adequate cause in the cruelties and idolatries of a spurious Christianity? The Jews are not prejudiced against religion in general, but only against Christ and Christianity in particular.

They have power equal to any other people to appreciate that which is sublime in morals and lovely in human character. Why then have they been so bitter against the New Testament and against the Lord Jesus Christ? We reply that nominal Christendom is largely responsible for Jewish prejudice against Christ and Christians. How is this vail to be removed?

- The 1st, ignorance—is to be removed by “**preaching the Gospel,**”
- The 2nd, prejudice—by preaching the Gospel in the spirit of the Gospel, “**that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy,**” not through your *cruelty* or even *neglect*.

Third vail—that which has obscured, and still obscures the typical character of the Levitical economy.

But this never hindered conversion and does not now hinder. See II Corinthians 3:12-16 for a reference to this vail.

“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.

“Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.”

Apart from the nature of the vail altogether, we have two points here very important and very clear.

First, whatever may be the nature of the veil, it was not inflicted on the Jews for rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ, for this veil was on them in the *days of Moses*—hundreds of years before Jesus was born.

The second point is of equal importance. It is to be taken away *after* conversion not *before*—“**Nevertheless when it—the heart—shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away,**” *not*—when the veil is taken away the heart shall turn to the Lord. How many Christians have prayed, and still pray—when they pray for Jews at all—Lord take the veil away that the Jews may turn to the Lord. If this veil was on the Jews in the days of Moses, remained on them till Paul’s day, and rests on them in this our day, what was the nature of the veil?

Look steadily at the Scripture and all will be clear. See Exodus 34:29-35.

“And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in mount Sinai. And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.”

Is it not a common view respecting this veil that it was something Moses put over his face, to hide or modify the brightness as being too dazzling to gaze upon? This is a profound mistake, and consequently, where held, the meaning of the veil has been lost.

On the first appearance of Moses, Aaron, the rulers, and the people seem to have started back in fear, for we learn that when Moses called to them, they “**returned unto him**”—first “**Aaron and all the rulers,**” then “**all the children of Israel;**” and Moses told them everything God had said to him before the veil is mentioned at all. And when “**Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.**” So we see that the veil was on his face neither when Moses spake to God nor when he spake to the people.

What then was the Nature and Use of the Veil?

Now let us look again into the 3rd chapter of Second Corinthians, and we shall get light. Paul here spoke of ministers of the Gospel as “**ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.**” The law kills for breaking it—“**the soul that sinneth it shall die,**” and “**sin is the transgression of law.**”

But under this dispensation of the Spirit the law-breaker gets life.

And then the apostle continues, “**But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious**”

This whole paragraph is before us: let us look at it carefully.

The glory on Moses’ face was *external* and *temporary*. The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shines out from an indwelling Deity, and is thus *internal* and *abiding*. Here we have “**glory that excelleth.**”

The glory of Moses’ face being *external*, illustrated, if it did not typify, the dispensation of externals then being inaugurated. The temporary nature of the glory— “**which glory was to be done away**”—illustrated or typified the temporary character of the Levitical economy.

What then was the object and teaching of the veil?

The veil was to hide the departing glory, and thus conceal the temporary character and typical nature of the Mosaic economy. This veil is done away in Christ; when the heart of the Jew turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. As far as this veil is concerned, the Christian Church would be more scripturally employed in using Gospel means, in prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit, in turning the Jewish heart to the Lord, than even in praying, “Lord, take the veil away, that the Jew may turn to the Lord.” We may scripturally seek the conversion of any Jew while this veil is still on his heart, for it is to be taken away *after* conversion, not necessarily *before*.

Fourth veil—*that which is the consequence of personal unbelief.*

Unbelief is the cause of this blindness—“**because of unbelief they were broken off.**” No man can be guilty of unbelief until he has had an opportunity of believing.

- A man may be in the dark for want of light, whilst another may be blinded with light.
- Many of the heathen are in the dark for want of light, whilst many in Christendom are blinded with light.

No Jew is exposed to judicial blindness for rejecting the Gospel until he has had an opportunity of accepting the Gospel. All Jews have not had such opportunity, and those who have had such opportunity have not all rejected the Gospel; some have always “**believed the things which were spoken**”—the result of Paul’s preaching to the Jews at Rome, and which has been the result of Gospel preaching to the Jews ever since.

Is there no such veil on the Gentiles? In the 4th chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul refers not only to the veil of ignorance on Gentiles, but also speaks of the “**blindness of their heart**”; “*hardening*” is the meaning of the word.

The Lord permits the god of this world to blind the minds of them that believe not. God threatens to send strong delusion, to the believing of a lie, on those who obey not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. It is of Gentiles that God says in Romans 1.

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God . . . their foolish (senseless) heart was darkened . . . Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts . . . for this cause God gave them up unto vile affections (passions) . . . And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind.”

Surely the blindness inflicted on unbelieving Gentiles is couched in terms as strong as those in which blindness inflicted on unbelieving Jews are expressed. There is certainly no difference in *favor* of the Gentile. The blindness of the Jew at worst is only partial—**“blindness in part is happened to Israel.”**

There is hope, bright hope, for even the broken-off branches— **“And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.”**

There is *nothing* in any of these four veils to hinder Jewish conversion, which does not equally discourage Gentile conversion. Indeed, **“there is no difference;”** since then the individual Jew is as eligible for conversion as is the individual Gentile, why should not the Church of Christ regard him as such, and place him, in her evangelistic effort, in the position he occupied eighteen hundred years ago?

- The veil of *ignorance* is to be removed by the simple preaching of the Gospel.
- The veil of *prejudice* is to be removed by preaching the Gospel in the spirit of the Gospel— **“that through your mercy”**—not cruelty, not neglect— **“they also may obtain mercy.”**
- The veil that obscured, and still obscures, the typical character of the Levitical economy, never hindered conversion, for the veil is to be removed *after* the heart has turned to the Lord.

The veil that is the *consequence* of individual unbelief is less hopeful, but not hopeless, for if they abide not in unbelief they **“shall be grafted in, for God is able to graff them in again;”** and the same veil for the same cause is inflicted on Gentiles.

If the Jews are properly treated there is no difficulty in the way of Jewish conversion that is not equaled by difficulties in the way of Gentile conversion. Indeed the scriptures rather encourage the doctrine that Jews are, humanly speaking, less difficult to convert than Gentiles.

Addressing the Gentiles, Paul says, **“For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?”** (Romans 11:24).

Wrong thoughts about the Jews have produced unkind and unchristian feelings towards the Jews; and wrong thoughts and wrong feelings have produced wrong conduct.

It is a mistake to use the expression “*Gentile Church*” as characterizing the Church of this dispensation. This may appear to some a matter of trifling importance, but it suggests unscriptural and dangerous inferences.

It leads Christians to infer that this is a purely Gentile dispensation, so that without any culpable neglect of duty they may leave the Jews alone until the times of the Gentiles close and the Gentile Church, so-called, is complete.

Now there has been a Jewish Church without Gentiles, but never a Gentile Church without Jews.

In the opening of this dispensation Jews were converted by thousands before any Gentiles as such were admitted to a share in the blessings of the Gospel. True, in the gathering of the Jews from all parts of the world at Pentecost, among the strangers from Rome there were “**Jews and proselytes.**” These proselytes, though of Gentile origin, were religiously Jews. When Peter preached the Gospel to the Gentiles he testified “**that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost**” (Acts 2:45).

A little further on we read that “**the Apostles and the brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the Word of God**” (Ch. 11:1).

Further on we read that they “**glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life**” (Ch. 11:18).

Paul also speaks of Gentile converts under this dispensation as “**fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel**” (Ephesians 3:6).

And again, as grafted in among Jewish believers, and as becoming “**with them partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree**” (Romans 11:17).

Gentiles were admitted into the Jewish Christian Church only to share on common terms the blessing of a common salvation: and the “**also to the Gentile**” is as truly the revealed mind of God as is “**to the Jew first.**”

~ end of chapter 10 ~

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