

fulness of the Gentiles

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.

- that blindness in part is happened to Israel
- until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in

Ephesians 2:16-22 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

- that he might reconcile both unto God in one body
- came and preached peace to you which were afar off
- through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father
- therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints
- and of the household of God
- are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets
- Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone
- In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord
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Introduction

We're going to work our way around Romans 11:11, 13-25 and 28-36 before directly addressing them in context of the 'fulness of the Gentiles'. This is one subject better understood by tracing events leading into it as well as the outcome from it. We will be 'filling in the blanks', so that commentary on Romans 11 will make more sense.

Whether scriptural or unscriptural, one's view on other biblical topics plays a role in how they interpret the sequence & timing of when, 'the fulness of the Gentiles be come in'. While holding true to hopes & callings in distinguishing between the kingdom gospel from that of Paul's gospel, as well as rejecting any notion of replacement theology, I'm of the persuasion that the church, the body of Christ has it's beginning with the 12 Apostles.

Paul's Ordained Appointment

To Be Testified in Due Time

As pointed out in numerous chapters within the Theme Study, God's destiny for Paul was revelation & ministry regarding the inclusion of Gentiles within God's redemptive plan.

- **1Tim 2:3-7** For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. 7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.
 - Who will have all men to be saved
 - there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus
 - Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time
 - Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle
 - a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity
- **Gal 3:8** And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.
 - scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith
 - preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying
 - In thee shall all nations be blessed
- **Gal 1:15-16** But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:
 - who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace
 - To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen
- Acts 8:1 gives record of Paul consenting to Stephen's death that was a third strike in the offering up of the kingdom to Israel... "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles." **Acts 8:1**
 - And Saul was consenting unto his death
- Acts 9 is record of Paul's conversion... "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." **Acts 9:6**
 - he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do

- Acts 10 Peter opens up the kingdom gates to the god-fearing household of Cornelius; **Acts 10:34-35** Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.
 - Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons
 - But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him
- Act 13 & 14 is record of the door 'of faith' being opened to the Gentiles; **Acts 14:26-27** And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. 27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.
 - they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled
 - how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles

Opening the Door of Faith unto the Gentiles

We're going to follow the path that Paul took in fulfilling his call, which eventually leads to the converted non-covenanted Gentiles addressed in Ephesians and Colossians. In doing so, we're first reminded of Paul's statement concerning the spread of the gospel of Christ... "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." **Romans 1:16**

Tracing Paul from being commissioned, we'll continue from Acts 13 through Acts 19 where we see Paul's steadfastness to not only the sequence of the gospel, but as to where his focus was... the synagogues of the Jews. What CANNOT be missed, along this path, is that it is in and around the synagogues that the first Greeks/Gentiles are recorded as being saved! A focus MUST remain on the scope of the audience!

<|> Synagogue at Salamis

Acts 13:5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

<|> Synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia

Acts 13:14-16 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. 16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience. 42-43 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. 43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the

Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: **who**, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

<|> **Synagogue at Iconium**

Acts 14:1-2 And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of **the Jews** and also of **the Greeks** believed. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the **Gentiles**, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

<|> **Synagogue at Thessalonica**

Acts 17:1-2 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a **synagogue of the Jews**: 2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and **three sabbath days** reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 4 And **some of them believed**, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the **devout Greeks** a great multitude, and of the **chief women** not a few.

<|> **Synagogue at Berea**

Acts 17:10-12 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the **synagogue of the Jews**. 11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. 12 Therefore **many of them believed**; also of **honourable women** which **were Greeks**, and **of men**, not a few.

<|> **Synagogue at Athens and in the Market**

Acts 17:16-17 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. 17 Therefore disputed he in the **synagogue with the Jews**, and with the **devout persons**, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

...and in the Market

Acts 17:23 For as I passed by, and beheld **your devotions**, I found an altar with this inscription, **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD**. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

<|> **Synagogue at Corinth**

Acts 18:1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; 4-6 And he reasoned in the **synagogue every sabbath**, and persuaded **the Jews** and **the Greeks**. 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to **the Jews** that Jesus was Christ. 6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, **Your blood be upon your own heads**; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto **the Gentiles**.

House joined hard to the synagogue at Corinth

Acts 18:7-8 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

<|>Synagogue at Ephesus

Acts 18:19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

<|> Synagogue at Ephesus

Acts 19:1, 8 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,... 8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

<|> School of one Tyrannus at Ephesus

Acts 19:9-10 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. 10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Paul's Acts' Path Update:

What cannot be over emphasized is Paul's audience and the transition of this audience. From the very beginning, his audience included both Jew and Greek/Gentile, found in and around the synagogues! This crowd consisted of the religious and pious/devout (Greeks who feared God). They were definitely well aware of Abraham and Israel's covenant promises.

At Athens (Acts 17), a third group of people are introduced into the mix and that being those of the market place. Certain of this crowd referred to Paul as a 'babbler' and "...other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection." Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them." **Acts 17:34**

In Acts 18 & 19, things came to a head! Paul encounters more resistance from the religious Jews, when entering their synagogues. The second of three announcements... 'we turn to the Gentiles', is made (Acts 18:6; 13:46; 28:28). After Paul witnessed Gentiles who feared and worshipped God become believers, Paul moves his focus of study from the synagogues... "to disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus."

It is **from Acts 19**, where we see the gospel of Christ going beyond the confines of the synagogues, that consisted of the religious Jews and devout Gentiles, to any and all Jews

and Greeks/Gentiles regardless of any 'religious' or 'pagan' inclinations... "And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." **Acts 19:10**

It is my conviction that it is this crowd of Gentiles, along with their converts, that Paul later addresses in his Ephesians' epistle. Though summoning a visit with the Ephesus' church elders in Acts 20, while at Miletus, Acts 19 is Paul's last recorded stay at Ephesus. Paul was still on course in fulfilling his ministry... "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." **Acts 20:24**

Eph 6:18-20 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

- that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel
- For which I am an ambassador in bonds

Up through Acts 17, churches that were assembled, as a result of Paul's ministry, consisted mostly of converts made in and around the synagogues. Obviously, these converts started to assemble outside of the synagogues and apparently in houses (Rom 16:5; 1Co 16:19; Col 4:15; Phm 2). When opportunity arose, Paul would visit these churches (Acts 14:23; 15:41; 16:5; 18:22; 20:17).

Paul's Prison Epistles

Paul addresses his ordained audience, the converted heathen, in his prison epistles. It's there where we find the end-game of mysteries surrounding the ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

Converted Non-Covenanted Gentiles Ephesians

Eph 1:9-23 Having made known unto **us the mystery of his will**, according to his good pleasure which **he hath purposed in himself**: 10 That in **the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth**; even **in him**: 11 **In whom also we have obtained an inheritance**, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of

Converted Non-Covenanted Gentiles Colossians

Col 1:3-5 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **praying always for you**, 4 **Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus**, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, 5 For **the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel**;

his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. 15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Eph 2:11-13 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ... **18-22** For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the

Col 1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Col 1:12-13 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

Col 1:18-27 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; 20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight: 23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; 24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: 25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Eph 4:10 He that descended **is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens,** that **he might fill all things.**

Col 3:1 **If ye then be risen with Christ,** seek those things **which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.**

Fulfilling the Fulness of the Gentiles

Jesus was made head of all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. As Christ ascended up far above all heavens that he might **fill all things**, so Paul was made a minister, according to the dispensation of God for these Gentiles, **to fulfil the word of God!**

Reflecting upon these passages, we're going to point out numerous things directly relating to this audience, in **fulfilling the fullness of the Gentiles**, within the body of Christ.

A. Reminded of Their Past

These converted non-covenanted Gentiles are reminded of their past outside the covenant promises to Israel.

- That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world
- ...And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

This is the condition that the Gentile was in since the establishment of the covenants with Israel.

B. A Second Wave of Gentiles Being Saved

Something that could easily be overlooked, in a causal reading, is in a distinction Paul makes between himself and these Gentiles. Paul identifies himself with those who 'first trusted in Christ'! I believe that Paul's identity, to those who first trusted in Christ, would include not only believers before his conversion, but also those Gentiles saved under the opening, of the door of faith, after Acts 13. In other words, Paul is addressing Gentiles who are not necessarily direct converts of his, but via other believing Gentiles, as a result of his ministry... "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, **If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:**" **Eph 3:1-2**

- **Eph 1:12-13** That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise
- **Eph 2:18** For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father
- **Col 1:3-4** We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints
- **Col 1:9** For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding

What Paul writes in these two epistles leaves no room for compromise, in being judged by others, as he did for those Gentiles in the mid-Acts period (Cp. Rom 14:1-6 & 1 Cor 10:23-33 w/Col 2:16).

Col 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

Both epistles are written from Paul's imprisonment in Rome. As a side note, for what it is worth, neither of these epistles deal with the subject of the 'faith of Abraham', as does Romans and Galatians. Chances are, that from the background of these Gentiles, the history on Abraham and covenant promises could be mostly, if not entirely, foreign to them? This certainly was the case with those whom Paul met with, in the market place, as described in Acts 17:18-34! Also, the background of these Jews and Greeks, to whom he was now reaching out to, is clearly defined in Acts 19:27-41... "So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth." **Acts 19:27**

... whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

Here again, we're reminded that Paul broke with protocol, while at Ephesus (Acts 19), in meeting with Jews and Gentiles in and around the synagogues. Paul is no longer dealing with a crowd of Greeks/Gentiles, who feared God, such that Cornelius and his household would have identified with!

Paul then later meets with elders of a church that was established at Ephesus; no doubt after Acts 18.

Acts 19:9-10 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. 10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Acts 20:17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

Acts 20:20-21 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Acts 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

...and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

C. A Product of Paul's Ministry and Gospel

These Gentiles, as were the Gentiles saved after the opening of the door of faith in Acts 13, were a direct result of both a ministry and message entrusted to Paul. The Twelve Apostles had absolutely NO part in this outreach of ministry... "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." **Gal 2:9**

Eph 3:1-2 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

- I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles
- If ye have heard
- of the dispensation of the grace of God
- which is given me to you-ward

Eph 3:6-7 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

- the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body

- partakers of his promise in Christ **by the gospel**
- Whereof **I was made a minister**

In spite of the fact that most of the mainline denominations are going about to fulfill a commission given to the Twelve, these Gentiles were saved under a commission directed through Paul.

D. Mystery Hid in God

Paul's gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, was hid in the prophets till revealed to and through Paul. Unlike Paul's gospel, which could be supported by the prophets, that these Gentiles should be fellowheirs and of same body, was not only a mystery hid in God, but also unsearchable in the prophets.

Eph 3:4-9 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

- Whereby, when **ye** read, **ye** may understand **my knowledge in the mystery of Christ**
- That the **Gentiles** should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of **his promise in Christ by the gospel**: 7 **Whereof I was made a minister**...
- that **I** should preach among the Gentiles the **unsearchable** riches of Christ
- And to make **all men** see what is the **fellowship of the mystery**, which **from the beginning of the world** hath been **hid in God**, who created all things by Jesus Christ

The Old Testament covers a time period in which Israel was blessed with the presence of the LORD. The Mosaic Covenant excluded the Gentile, who is depicted by Paul in Romans 1, as those who God gave up and then over to a reprobate mind. The prophets prophesied a time in which covenants made to Abraham, Moses and David would once again be honored with God's presence. Never foreseen, in the prophets, was the day in which those depicted by Paul, in Romans 1, would be of the same household as the Jew.

E. Mystery Among the Gentiles

There is another aspect of this that is often overlooked. Paul wrote to the Corinthians... "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." **2 Cor 5:17** This is different from the point that Paul makes in addressing both the Ephesians and Colossians. As already pointed out, that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel in which Paul was appointed, was a mystery hid in God. That Christ would function in the Gentile today, to perform His will, much like He intended in the early Jewish church, was in of itself a mystery hid from ages and from generations!

Col 1:26-28 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

- To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles
- Which is Christ in you, the hope of glory

Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

As the Lord worked in the midst of His Apostles, in following their commission (Mk 16:19-20), so He works today... "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." **Col 2:6-7**

F. Of the Household of God

Being a Jew himself, Paul declares that as the Jew had access unto the Father by one Spirit, so the Gentile now has that same access. Being made nigh by the blood of Christ with the middle wall of partition, contained in ordinances, taken out of the way, the non-covenanted Gentile now finds themselves within the household of God.

Eph 2:13-16 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

- But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ

- For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us
- for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace
- that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby

Eph 2:18-22

- For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father
- Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God
- And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone
- In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord
- In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit

What is essential to understand is that these Gentiles, now belonging to the household of God, are part of a building being fitly framed together growing unto an holy temple in the Lord. Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, these converted Gentiles were being built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

This building process of the household of God, progressing through hopes and callings, encompasses both heaven and earth!

The sequence, in this building process, will be addressed shortly.

G. Reassuring the Hope of Their Calling

Paul found need to inform these converted non-covenanted Gentiles as to how they fit into the scheme of things relating to the eternal purpose of God. What, if any, inheritance do they have outside the covenant promise to Abraham regarding a land? This reassurance is found in Paul's opening statement... "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:" **Eph 1:3**

- Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers... The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints
- In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will
- If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God

Remember Paul's speech to the Ephesian elders?... "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

Here's an interesting comparison of statements made by Paul, recorded in Acts, regarding these Gentiles having been sanctified:

Paul Before the Elders from Ephesus

Acts 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

- to give you an inheritance
- among all them which are sanctified

1Cor 1:2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be saints*, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

Heb 2:11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

Jude 1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:

Paul Standing Before King Agrippa

Acts 26:15-18 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. ¹⁶ But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; ¹⁷ Delivering thee from the people, and *from the Gentiles*, unto whom now I send thee, ¹⁸ To open their eyes, *and to turn them* from darkness to light, and *from the power of Satan* unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

- Delivering thee
- from the people
- and *from the Gentiles*
- unto whom now I send thee
- To open their eyes, *and to turn them* from darkness to light, and *from the power of Satan* unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins
- and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me

Those 'in Christ' before Paul, were also sanctified/preserved in Christ Jesus! In closely paying attention to the KJB, we see a sequence spelled out in progression of inheritances.

Delivering thee:

- A. From the people
- B. and from the Gentiles
- C. Unto whom now I send thee

The 'them' in context would be the heathen that now find themselves obtaining an... inheritance among them which are sanctified 'by faith' that is in me. Though I could argue it either way, I wouldn't hesitate in showing a distinction that Paul makes in Eph 2:8-9, that is a major theme of this website, being the distinction between justification 'by faith' from 'through faith'... "For by grace are ye saved 'through faith'; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast." **Eph 2:8-9**

Unlike the covenant promise to Abraham's seed to inherit a land, their inheritance is associated with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Here, we're reminded of which direction the LORD had Abraham to look when Abraham had imputed righteousness based on simply believing a promise made... "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." **Gen 15:5-6**

H. Dispensation of the Fullness of Times

In addressing the inheritance of the saints, Paul reveals that it will be in the dispensation of the fullness of times (that I believe to be immediately after Christ's coming), in which God will gather together all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him. It is important to recognize distinction in hopes and callings regarding those who are in Christ! There's no evidence of anyone being in Christ before the resurrection! The scripture can easily be searched to show who was in Christ and its beginning.

- Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:
- That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him

Purposed in himself, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, that are in him, will be gathered together in one. In other words, the temple will be complete and distinguishable in the fullness of times... "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:" **Eph 3:9-11**

Notice carefully, how that in the context of '**all things**', it is the church being the manifold wisdom the God, that is being recognized by the principalities and powers in heavenly places!

I. The Church, Which is His Body, The Fulness of Him that Filleth All in All

- He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens
- that he might fill all things

Why the emphasis of Paul on Christ's accession far above all heavens, that he might fill all things? By now it should all be obvious! In considering the scope of the temple that God is putting together, that includes heaven and earth, even in him, the hope and calling of these converted non-covenanted Gentiles will someday play a functioning role in Christ representing the heavenly realm. This is our hope and calling!

I have seen argument made that the ascension mentioned here by Paul, in Christ ascending up far above all heavens that he might fill all things, suggests a step further upwards from an original position at the right hand of God, to fill a higher vacancy. Though perhaps making some 'good preaching', as well as being thought provoking, this argument is rather hard to prove. True or not, our 'heavenly' hope remains the same!

Before moving on, a sidenote concerning the Lord's ascension is mentioned.

Perspectives are important regarding an audience to which a particular epistle is written. In addressing Jewish Christians, it is stated... "Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;" **Heb 4:15** "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." **Heb 1:3**

Though no mention of the Lord's function as being an high priest in his epistles written with Gentiles in mind, Paul does speak of the Lord's intercessory work in his epistle to the Romans... 'that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' (Rom 8:34) If Moses role was all of that in being a prophet (Deut 34:10), priest (Ps 99:6) and king (Deut 33:4-5), as head of the nation of Israel all at the same time, then why couldn't Christ be serving same roles at His ascension?

J. To Fulfil the Word of God

It is virtually impossible to separate the blindness that is in part, that has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, from Paul's ministry with outreach that included non-covenanted Gentiles that Paul addresses in his prison epistles.

Rom 11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

Rom 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.

Eph 3:1-2 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

Eph 3:6-8 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

Col 1:25-27 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

- Whereof I am made a minister
- according to the dispensation of God
- which is given to me for you
- **to fulfil the word of God**

Paul's ministry was in fulfilling the word of God, as God began assembling the next phase in construction of the building fitly framed together that groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. In this dispensation of the grace of God, non-covenanted Gentiles were now being built together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit, that would someday be manifested in the dispensation of the fullness of times.

Salvation is Come to the Gentiles

Rom 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.

Having first dealt with the 'fullness of the Gentiles', along with other surrounding issues, now makes it much easier in dealing with the remaining uncovered verses in this chapter. My commentary will follow the passages listed, that are yet to be analyzed, in dealing with specific issues that need to be clearly identified.

Rom 11:13-25 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: 14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. 15 For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? 16 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. 17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; 18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. 19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: 21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. 22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. 23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again. 24 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? 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.**

Rom 11:28-36 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. 29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. 30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: 31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God hath concluded them **all in unbelief**, that **he might have mercy upon all.** 33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

[11:29] the gifts and calling of God are without repentance

In view of what all has already been covered, that included hopes and callings and the day in which all things will be gathered together in one, even in Christ, Paul's statement in verse 29, is of most significance and therefore brought out first... "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." God is not through with hopes and callings, relating to our Lord Jesus Christ, "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," **Eph 3:15**

When we think of an 'inheritance', it's typically our interest in what we're getting out of something? Paul makes a contrasting point in addressing these Gentiles in Ephesians... "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," **Eph 1:18**

- he eyes of your understanding being enlightened
- that ye may know what is the hope of his calling
- and what the riches of the glory of **his inheritance** in the saints

One day, we will completely understand how the various members, of the body of Christ, will function in its relationship to regathered Israel and the nations that will serve her during the 1,000-year reign of Christ. I believe that there will be those reigning with Christ, over the earthly realm, as well as those seated in the heavenly realm.

[11:13-14; 28-36] The Serving Purposes of Israel's Blindness

Israel's blindness in part served three purposes:

First, through the longsuffering of God, it brought opportunity to the Gentile that they didn't previously have... "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief". **v.30**

Second, because a Jew, now being seen as a Gentile in unbelief, is bringing extended opportunity to the Jew that was lost at the time of Israel's rejection of their Messiah... "Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." **vv.31-32** At the time of the presentation of the kingdom offer to Israel, being at hand, the wrath of God was presented as soon on the horizon.

Third, God showing mercy to the Gentile, in which there was now a perception of acceptance, was to provoke a jealousy factor. Actually, the exact opposite seems to have happened as the Jew resisted Paul at every opportunity... "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." **1Thes 2:16**

[11:13-25] Firstfruit; Lump; Root; Grafting and Branches

Once the concept of what God is doing, in the progression of building the household of God, upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone is understood, all else begins to fall in place.

When John the Baptist came on the scene, he told the Pharisees and Sadducees... "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." **Mat 3:9** Simply claiming ties to Abraham, through covenant promises, no longer cut it! John now demanded confession of sins and repentance from this covenanted seed.

For the Gentile, being grafted in Christ, via a baptism by the Spirit (Rom 6:1-4; 1Co 12:13; Gal 3:27-29), things are now different... "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all," **Rom 4:16**

- Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace
- to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed
- not to that only which is of the law
- but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham
- who is the father of us all

Gal 3:27-29 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Phi 3:3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Col 2:11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

The words 'firstfruit' and 'firstfruits', are obvious references to the Lord Jesus Christ and the early believers (Ro 8:23; Ro 11:16; Ro 16:5; 1Co 15:20,23; 1Co 16:15; Jas 1:18).

The 'lump', is in reference to the firstfruits, as the root and branches are clearly tied to the relationship between the Lord Jesus and the believer, as depicted by Jesus in John 15; in particular, His disciples as they were commissioned.

Rom 11:16 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

John 15:4-8 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

The 'grafting' aspect, of Paul's argument, should now make perfect sense! As we see the blindness in part, happening to Israel, the inclusion of the Gentile via Paul's ministry, is those Gentile believers being baptized into Christ, where Paul states there's no distinction between Jew and Gentile. Though it is questioned how a Gentile's conversion or God working His grace among the nations today, provokes jealousy among the Jews or Israel, it was a factor the Romans were to consider then.

Closing Thoughts

In closing this chapter, on the fulness of the Gentiles, here's a question to consider in trying to discern these things regarding the church, the body of Christ. When Peter sits on one of the thrones judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel, along with the other Apostles, do each in representing one of the tribes, in being a Jew, or as a ruling representative of the Body of Christ, over a 'new nation' during the Millennium?

One day, when this dispensation of grace ends, God will again turn His attention to the nation of Israel.

In the meantime... "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of

your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." **Rom 12:1-2**