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## The Fullness - Part I

**Romans 11:25-26:** 25. *For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.* 26. *And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:* In Paul's day only a few Jews accepted Jesus as the Messiah, and the rest were blinded, which resulted in the gospel being given to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46). Some questions to be answered in this series are: 1) What does it mean to come into the fulness? 2) When the fulness comes, will the blindness of the Jews disappear? 3) Is Paul looking at literal Israel as a spiritual type?

**Romans 9:1-4:** 1. *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,* 2. *That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.* 3. *For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh (i.e. literal Jews):* 4. *Who are Israelites; to whom pertains the adoption,* etc. Paul has a concern for fellow Jews, literal Israel, who have rejected their Messiah.

**Romans 9:6-8:** (read verses 6-13): 6. *Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:* 7. *Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.* 8. *That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.* Is Paul explaining verse 6 by saying that children via Ishmael are not Israelites? Is that not how it is taken today? In verse 8, Paul explains that the *children of the flesh, these are not the children of God.* This cannot be true in the literal sense, as we are all children of the flesh. He is making a distinction between the literal and spiritual Jew and how the spiritual lineage is through Isaac and Jacob, and not through Ishmael and Esau.

There are those who will say that there is no mention of a "spiritual Jew" in the Bible. The actual phrase does not appear, but the concept is certainly there: **Romans 2:28-29:** 28. *For he is not a (spiritual) Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:* 29. *But he is a (spiritual) Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter (writings of the law); *whose praise is not of men, but of God.* So, a literal Jew and literal circumcision are figures of something inward - i.e. spiritual. When the heart is circumcised (Dt 30:6; Col 2:11) by the truth of Jesus Christ, the Jew and Gentile become spiritual Jews. A spiritual Jew cannot be circumcised by the letter of the law, but only by the spirit of life in Christ (Rom 8:1-4). Based on these verses, there are two Israel's in Romans 9:6 - literal and spiritual, and not all literal Jews are of spiritual Israel. Paul also mentions Abraham's two sons as types in another place:*

**Galatians 4:22-26:** 22. *For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.* 23. *But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.* 24. *Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai (Dt 4:13), which [gives birth] to bondage, which is Hagar.* 25. *For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.* 26. *But Jerusalem (Rv 3:12) which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.* Paul uses the actual story of Abraham as an allegory of the Old and New

Covenants. Additionally, he uses Jerusalem allegorically. Old Jerusalem, a city represented by a woman, is a type for an earthly mind-set governed by the law - this is a literal Jew, whose relationship to God is determined by the flesh and not the Spirit of God. New Jerusalem is a heavenly mind-set, or a spiritual Jew governed by the spirit of truth, which is Christ (Jn 14:6). Now, a literal Jew can also be a spiritual Jew; a Gentile can be a spiritual Jew, but is not a literal Jew. In Romans chapters 9-11, In my Bible I marked literal "Israel" with a "L", and spiritual Israel with a "S" so that I can quickly tell the difference when reading these chapters.

**Romans 9:22-24, 27:** (YLT) 22. *And if God, willing to shew the wrath and to make known His power, did endure, in much long suffering, vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, 23. and that He might make known the riches of His glory on vessels of kindness, that He before prepared for glory, whom also He did call - us, 24. not only out of Jews, but also out of nations (Gentiles), .... 27. And Isaiah doth cry concerning Israel, 'If the number of the sons of Israel may be as the sand of the sea, the remnant shall be saved. (Isa 10:20-22) At the time Paul is writing, only a remnant of the Jews had accepted the Gospel, and many of those Jews gave the gospel to the Gentiles, who have become spiritual Jews. (In the KJ and 52 other Bible versions "his" is supplied in front of "wrath.")*

Notice, those rejecting the truth are *vessels of wrath* and those accepting the truth are called *vessels of kindness*. God's wrath is defined as God turning away from, or giving up those who refuse to depart from their wickedness (Rom 1:18-32). People who do this make God like man (Ps 50:21) - full of anger and vengeance. They are said to have been made to *drink of the wine of the wrath of her (Babylon's) fornication* (Rv 14:8). The wrath of God is how man sees God, and it is man's wrath. God is not angry. He desires that all mankind be saved (1Tim 2:4).

**Romans 9:30-33:** 30. *What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not (after) righteousness, have attained (to) righteousness, even (the) righteousness which is [from] faith. 31. But Israel, which followed (after) the law of righteousness, has not attained to (the) law of righteousness. 32. Wherefore? Because they sought it not from faith (Christ's), but as it were from works of law (man's interpretation of the law). For they stumbled at that stumbling stone; 33. As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and a rock of offence: and whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed (Isa 8:14; 28:16). The Messiah did not come in the manner as the leaders expected, who had also taught the people what to expect. Therefore, the majority of the Jews held on to their traditional beliefs, continued to be governed by the law, and to this day are still looking for the Messiah. Christians accept that Jesus was the Messiah, but in which version of Christ do they believe (there are at least five)? Jesus warned: *Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many* (Mt 24:4-5).*

Summary: Paul was concerned for his fellow countrymen. But by using Abraham's wives as an allegory, he shows in a different way how Jesus came to unite Jew and Gentile (Eph 2:11-19), making them all spiritual Jews. So, when reading these chapters one needs to note whether he is talking about literal Israel or spiritual Israel.

While the Jews built a literal wall in the temple to keep Gentiles separate from Jews, there was a spiritual wall in their minds, by making themselves God's exclusive people. Non-Jews were considered unclean, and needed to convert to Judaism in order to receive God's blessings. It is no different today, in that religious organizations hold the belief that everyone has to convert to their understanding of God, or suffer punishment and destruction by God. Religion is manmade. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (Jn 1:17). HE IS the way the truth and the life (Jn 14:6)! Amen.