Romans 11:25 (John Thomas Mawson) 174961

Answers to Correspondents, Fullness of the Gentiles, The (11:25)

Romans 11:25

R.H. This is not identical with “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24) to which you also refer. This latter is the whole period during which Jerusalem is subject to Gentile rule: it began with the Babylonian captivity of Judah under Nebuchadnezzar, and will extend until the time when at the close of Daniel’s seventieth week the Gentile world power is smitten and destroyed by the “stone cut out without hands” (Dan. 2:34-35, 44), that is, at the coming of the Lord as predicted in Revelation 19:11.

As to “the fullness of the Gentiles,” however, we may point out that God’s dealings with Israel as His specially favored and chosen people on earth, were suspended as a result of their rejection of Christ as their Messiah; they were blind and saw not in the One who came “meek and sitting on an ass” their all-glorious King; they were deaf and would not listen to His word of emancipation and life. So they stumbled, and He became a rock of offense to them. But by their fall, salvation has gone out to the Gentiles (verse II), and the harvest of this gospel amongst the Gentiles will be the Church, the Bride of Christ. This is the fullness of the Gentiles.

But when the fullness of the Gentiles is gathered in — that is, when the Church has been caught up to her appointed place in heaven above — God will resume (from the beginning of Daniel’s seventieth week) His dealings with Israel, beloved for the fathers’ sakes, “and so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written. There shall come out of Zion a Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (ver. 26).

So that Israel’s rejection of Christ did but further God’s gracious and eternal purpose of gathering out of the nations a people for Himself, nor will the promises made to Abraham and David fail of fulfillment. Thus God makes the very wrath of men to praise Him, and well may we exclaim with the apostle, as we view it all: “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! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor? or who hath first given to Him and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen” (verses 33-36).