The Importance of the Effectual Working of Romans 9–11

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In Romans 9–11 the apostle Paul provides for us to have a clear and proper fundamental understanding of what has happened to God's former program with Israel, seeing that not long after the Lord Jesus Christ returned to heaven God made a great dispensational change. As is evident following the conclusion of Acts chapter 7, God suddenly broke off His prophesied program and dealings with His nation. He unexpectedly ceased His operations for the continuation and fulfillment of Israel's program. Whereupon He then raised up Paul to be His brand new apostle, as recorded in Acts 9, and He brought in this present unprophesied dispensation of His grace to us Gentiles with its new and different program. And as Paul explains, God did all of this intentionally as the result of deliberate forethought and planning. For He did it in accordance with fulfilling "the mystery of Christ"; the secret purpose that He has in Christ, which He had kept hid in Himself since before the world began until He revealed it to and through the apostle Paul.

Now in view of God making this unprecedented and unprophesied dispensational change, it is imperative that we have a clear and accurate understanding of what has happened to Israel and their program. We must know exactly what this dispensational change means, both to Israel and to us. Furthermore we must know what its consequences and ramifications are, both now and for the future. For if we do not clearly know these things we will not only misunderstand what has happened to Israel and be confused by the dispensational change, but we will also end up mishandling the things in God's word that strictly pertain to Israel's program. And what's worse, we will foolishly, and in direct disobedience to God, misapply such things to ourselves today.

Wherefore it is essential right from the beginning of our Christian lives that we possess a proper and precise dispensational understanding and viewpoint; i.e. that we become dispensationally established and oriented. And the specific form of doctrine that God has designed to give this to us is Romans 9–11.

The Impact of Its Effectual Working

As we become dispensationally established and oriented, this first of all prevents us from being confused by what God has done, as well as preventing us from engaging in any of the aforementioned Bible-mishandling. However Romans 9–11 also provides for much more than this. For example it provides for us to think about the Bible's entire teachings in accordance with how God has composed them, with the result that we actually learn to think Biblically as well. And this stands in stark contrast to what Christians so commonly do, which is to think about what the Bible teaches in either a topical, or categorical, or even systematic manner, according to man-made systems of teaching, learning, and theology. All of which more times than not simply result in Christians having a disjointed, or disconnected, or compartmentalized understanding of things, usually amounting to nothing more than a few 'fundamentals of the faith.' However this is not how God has designed for us to think, nor how he has designed His word to be handled and/or taught. And so as the effectual working of Romans 9–11 dispensationally establishes us and

orients us, it also provides for us to both think and learn Biblically as well.

Furthermore the effectual working of Romans 9–11 also provides for us to learn to begin to think dispensationally *on the whole*, just like God does. In other words it provides for us to think expansively in accordance with the outworking of God's overall plan and purpose, and to have our awareness, our viewpoint, our understanding, and all of our thoughts and decisions conformed to it.

Now there are a number of reasons why thinking dispensationally *on the whole* is needful for us in our sonship edification. However one in particular is that as we think like God does it enables us to learn to comprehend the genius of what He is doing. It enables us to perceive and discern His masterful detailed planning, purposing, and wisdom in formulating, and then carrying out, His complex dispensational scheme; along with being able to perceive how everything within it fits together, works together, and makes sense. And this is exactly what God wants us to be able to do as His "sons." In fact it is an essential part of our godly edification. For it is what will enable us to intelligently rejoice with Him in "the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God"; and to do so not only in connection with what He has being doing in the past and is doing now, but also with respect to what He will yet be doing in "the ages to come."

Now all of the doctrines that are designed to produce this full measure of our dispensational understanding and thinking are not taught to us in Romans, but they are given to us later on. Nevertheless it is the doctrines of Romans 9–11 that initially produce within us the capacity to eventually deal with that fulness of knowledge.

Therefore the impact of their effectual working is far-reaching, affecting so many things and extending throughout the entire curriculum of our sonship edification. Hence we must benefit from their effectual working, so that we become properly established and oriented dispensationally; and so that once this takes place we, like our Father, can begin to think dispensationally *on the whole* as well.

First Things First

In connection with establishing us dispensationally, one of the first things God does in Romans 9–11 is to pointedly confront us with the great dispensational change that He has made. In so doing He not only provides for us to acknowledge it, but also to *honestly* deal with it. And this in turn equips us to be "rightly dividing the word of truth" in accordance with it. Hence throughout the doctrines of Romans 9–11 we find Paul teaching us things that are essential to the formation of our fundamental dispensational understanding and handling of God's word.

Simply put these 'first things first' issues range from things pertaining to the proper understanding that we need to have about God's dealings with Israel *before* He suspended His program with them, to things pertaining to what Israel's situation is *now* in view of the suspension of their program, to specific details about both the resumption and fulfillment of their program that is yet *to come*. Hence in connection with these things God first of all provides for us to clearly and properly identify the portion of His word pertaining to "time past," along with the portion that pertains to what He is doing with us right "now," and then the portion that pertains to what is yet "to come" when He resumes and fulfills Israel's program. This once again enables us to be "rightly dividing the word of truth" accordingly, and by so doing to be properly handling the Bible so that we do not misapply any of its teachings that do not apply to us today. And with this our proper dispensational understanding gets underway.

The Basic Practicality of our Dispensational Establishment

Now even when we just consider this basic accomplishment, it is obvious that Romans 9–11 is an essential portion to the curriculum for our sonship edification. For by this simple aspect of its effectual working within us we are able to understand that we in this present dispensation are neither assume-ers or fulfill-ers of God's program with Israel. For we are plainly taught that we have not replaced Israel in God's plan and purpose, and therefore we are not to think of ourselves as if we have. Nor are we to think of ourselves as 'spiritual Israelites,' or any other such thing, as if we were somehow spiritually fulfilling Israel's role, but just not literally doing so. Rather Romans 9–11 teaches us to understand and appreciate that God's plan and purpose with Israel remains unchanged. God has not changed His mind about Israel at all, nor has He altered His intention with them one whit. Instead God's program with Israel is not only still intact, but it will yet be fully resumed, as well as completely and perfectly fulfilled, just as God has promised and covenanted. And as Paul teaches, this will take place after God concludes His new and different program with us today, who are His "new creature," the church the body of Christ.

So then the effectual working of Romans 9–11 is highly practical for us. In fact our functional lives as Christians actually depend upon it, as much as they depend upon the effectual working of Romans 6–8. For most fundamentally of all Romans 9–11 is designed to ensure that we do not corrupt our Christian lives by misunderstanding, mishandling, and misapplying the portions of the Bible that expressly pertain to God's program with Israel. More to the point its doctrines first of all prevent us from failing to 'rightly divide the word of truth' *at all*, by preventing us from either not acknowledging the reality of God's two different programs, or from making no attempt at keeping them separate and distinct. Likewise they also prevent us from failing to 'rightly divide' God's word *precisely*, by preventing us from mistakenly thinking, for example, that this present dispensation of God's grace began before it actually did, and thereby misapplying things to ourselves that still pertained to Israel's program. At the same time they prevent us from taking the portion of God's word that pertains to the resumption and fulfillment of Israel's program and mistakenly applying it to ourselves as well.

Therefore in view of the vital, practical nature of the dispensational doctrines of Romans 9–11, it should not surprise us that God has Paul teach them to us immediately following our sonship establishment at the end of Romans 8. Likewise we should perceive God's wisdom in having them immediately precede the actual commencement of our sonship education in Romans 12. For it should be obvious that before we can actually begin our sonship education in earnest, we must not only have it firmly settled in our minds that we know exactly who we are in God's plan and purpose, but we must also know exactly where God's specific curriculum for our education today is to be found in the Bible. And it is on the basis of knowing how to be "rightly dividing" God's word *precisely*, that we are able to clearly identify that Paul's epistles is the portion of God's word that expressly pertains to us in this present dispensation. They, therefore, contain the curriculum for our edification today. And once again it is the effectual working of Romans 9–11 that provides for us to have this clear understanding.

A Closer Look At The Role of Romans 10:14–21 in Our Dispensational Establishment

In connection with our need to be "rightly dividing the word of truth" *precisely* and not be mistakenly thinking that this present dispensation of God's grace began before it actually did, it is essential that we clearly understand what was taking place during the time leading up to when

God suddenly suspended Israel's program and turned to us Gentiles. In other words we must clearly understand what was taking place during both the Gospel accounts and the opening chapters of the book of Acts. Otherwise we are liable to make the common, yet costly mistake of thinking that it was during this particular time that God brought in this present dispensation, and that what we find therein is about us and applies to us today.

Wherefore in the overall teaching of Romans 9–11 the latter half of Romans 10 is very important for us to understand and appreciate. For in it Paul focuses upon the time described in the Gospels, and particularly in the opening chapters of Acts, as they pertained to Israel's program. And by what he teaches he shows how that it was during that time that the climactic stage to Israel's program arrived, and that during the time of Acts 1–7 Israel "stumbled at that stumblingstone" in their unbelief; even though God gave them abundant opportunity to respond positively to the truth of Jesus Christ.

Now as Paul deals with this particular matter, he brings up an issue that is of great significance to the clear formation of our fundamental dispensational understanding. What he brings up is the issue of something special that God did in Israel's past. Something by which He expressly provided for them to know in advance exactly what would be taking place during the time that would be recorded in the Gospels and Acts 1–7. Moreover in view of this special thing that God did, (and especially in view of the specific knowledge that it gave), Paul also points out how that God considers His people to have no excuse for being ignorant of, or misunderstanding the truth of, what was taking place during that time. Hence, as Paul sets forth, Israel is responsible for their own stumbling during that time.

In view of this we should readily recognize that what Paul brings up is very significant to the formation of our *precise* dispensational understanding. For by this same knowledge we too are given to clearly understand exactly what was taking place during the Gospel accounts and the opening chapters Acts. With the result that we should plainly recognize that this present dispensation of God's grace did not begin, nor was it in effect, back at that time.

Moreover in view of this specific knowledge that God gave, we too can be considered to be without excuse if we should mistakenly think, (or continue to mistakenly think), that God had either brought in, or was bringing in, this present dispensation of His grace during that time.

Wherefore since we are giving brief consideration to the effectual working of Romans 9–11 within us, (especially as it pertains to ensuring that we not only 'rightly divide the word of truth' per se, but that we do it *precisely*), let us take a closer look at this special informative thing that God did and appreciate its impact.

A Significant Question and Its Equally Significant Answer

As Paul gives the evidence that proves Israel to be responsible for "stumbling at that stumblingstone," his final piece is the most forceful of all. And he enters it into evidence by asking a very significant and poignant question.

> 19 But I say, Did not Israel know? (Romans 10:19a)

The only thing that could legitimately excuse Israel for 'stumbling at the stumblingstone' would be if they honestly did not know how God was going to deal with them during that time, and therefore they truly did not know what to expect or know what was going on. If such was the case, then under the circumstances Israel would have a legitimate excuse for stumbling. Their ignorance would be justified. Hence the poignancy of the question.

However as Paul's answer shows, Israel has no such excuse.

> 19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a foolish nation I will anger you.
>
> 20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.
>
> 21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

(Romans 10:19–21)

Paul's answer makes it plain that Israel cannot claim or plead ignorance. They cannot claim they did not "know." In fact Paul's answer is actually quite sobering as it 'turns the tables,' so to speak, on Israel and shows that far from being able to plead ignorance the exact opposite is the case. Instead of not knowing, Israel is completely inexcusable. For as Paul shows God first of all gave Israel a special 'heads up,' so to speak, by foretelling them exactly how He would be dealing with them during that time; which is what He set forth through Moses.

Moreover as that time approached God also gave Israel a special kind of advance testimony in Isaiah's day. A testimony that actually served as an advance warning and as an admonition to that prophesied generation that was to come.

Therefore by means of Moses' prophecy, and also by means of the effectual working of God's advance warning and admonition through Isaiah, the people of Israel during the time of the Gospel accounts and the opening chapters of Acts were not only forewarned what to expect, they were also forearmed in connection with it.

The Special Nature of Deuteronomy 32 and Isaiah 65

> 21 They have moved me to jealousy with *that which is* not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with *those which are* not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.

(Deuteronomy 32:21)

> 1 I am sought of *them that* asked not *for me;* I am found of *them that* sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation *that* was not called by my name.
>
> 2 I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way *that was* not good, after their own thoughts;

(Isaiah 65:1–2)

What God said to Israel through Moses in Deuteronomy 32:21 and then through Isaiah in Isaiah 65:1–2 are indeed of a special nature. This is because God specifically designed these two utterances to function more or less as announcements to which Israel was expected to give heed. As such they were designed to manifestly describe to Israel in advance exactly what would be taking place in God's program with them immediately following the days of their Messiah's presence among them.

Now these two passages were designed to do this because God placed them within two very special portions of His word to Israel. Two portions which God clearly described as being special, and then also told Israel to focus upon them, and begin dealing with them, once they began to experience the punishments of the Fifth Course of Punishment of the Law. For this reason what is set forth in Deuteronomy 32 is called "the song of Moses," which God commanded Israel to learn so that it would eventually function as a witness against them in the time to come. Hence God said to Moses,…

> 19 Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it to the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. …
>
> 21 And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed: for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I sware.

(Deuteronomy 31:19–21)

In like manner the opening verses to Isaiah 65 occur within a very special portion of Isaiah, who was the first and foremost of the Fifth Course of Punishment prophets to Israel. The words of Isaiah 65:1–2 are spoken in the final portion of what God says through Isaiah, which is where He pointedly prepares Israel both for the coming days of the Messiah and for immediately thereafter by repeatedly instructing them to "Behold" what will be taking place in those days. In so doing God provided for the people of Israel's eyes to see and for their ears to hear, and hence for them to be able to respond positively to Him, when He would be strongly and passionately appealing to them immediately after Christ was with them.

The Fulfillment of What Moses and Isaiah Said

As Paul points out, Moses told Israel that immediately following Christ's presence among them God would be 'provoking Israel to jealousy' and He would be 'angering them.' Moreover God would do this by means of "*them that are* no people" and by "a foolish nation." Consequently in order for this to occur the "no people" would need to exist, and the "foolish nation" would need to be brought into existence, during the time of Christ's presence in Israel. And this is exactly what the Gospel accounts describe.

Now though there is a tendency to think that the designations "no people" and "a foolish nation" might refer to people other than Israelites, (i.e. Gentiles or a specific Gentile people), this is not the case. Rather they both refer to the believing remnant of Israel, who began to be called out of Israel by the "gospel of the kingdom" during the opening days of the Messiah. And who then are established and identified as 'the nation of God's inheritance' by the time that Christ is ready to return to His Father.

When a people is spoken of as "no people" it is because they are looked down upon by others, being thought of as inferior for some reason, or worthless, or of no account, etc. And those that look down upon them do so because they think of themselves as being something special.

So it is then that the believing remnant of Israel is spoken of as "no people" by God. Because this is exactly how they were going to be looked upon by the "very froward generation" of apostate Israel that would exist during the time of the Fifth Course of Punishment, and that would reach its zenith during the Lord's presence in Israel.

Now in preparation for the fulfillment of what Moses declared, the Gospel accounts testify that during their time the "no people" and "foolish nation" Moses talked about is exactly what began to be called out and established. For example as the beginning of the Gospels relate, the "gospel of the kingdom" began to be preached by the Lord in the very place in the land of Israel that apostate Israel despised. In other words the Lord began to preach "the gospel of the kingdom" to the very people in Israel who were considered to be "no people." Hence we read,…

> 12 Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;
>
> 13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:
>
> 14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,
>
> 15 The land of Zabulon and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;
>
> 16 The people which sat in darkness saw a great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

(Matthew 4:12–16)

Those in Galilee who believed the Lord's preaching were definitely "no people" to apostate Israel. Since the time of the beginning of the Fifth Course of Punishment Israel's vain religious system had looked down upon Israelites who lived there, and they despised them because they were Galileans — (of "Galilee of the Gentiles") — and not of Jewry.

Moreover these Israelites who believed the "gospel of the kingdom" also *individually* failed to come up to apostate Israel's standard for what they thought to be fundamental acceptance with God. For to apostate Israel they were not noble people in God's sight at all, seeing that they were sinners, and publicans, and poor, and widows, and fatherless, and the like. Hence these believers of "the gospel of the kingdom" were doubly despised; doubly "no people."

Nevertheless they were the prophesied remnant of Israel; the "no people" of Deuteronomy 32. And as these "no people" believers of the "gospel of the kingdom" continued to be called out of Israel, the Lord also began to form them collectively into what they would soon constitute in God's sight — i.e. the 'nation of God's inheritance'; His righteous people; "the Israel of God."

And indeed they would be "the Israel of God." For as the prophets also set forth, God would be consigning the apostate nation to destruction during the final round of punishments in the Fifth Course of Punishment. Therefore once the climactic stage of the program was underway there would be the conceiving of the righteous nation in the midst of Israel. It would be composed of the believing remnant of Israel; the ones who would be 'called out of Jacob' to be 'the nation of God's inheritance.' And then following its conception it would develop, and it would then come to the birth during the travail of Israel's "last days."

So then in view of the fact that these "no people" believers of the "gospel of the kingdom" constituted a national entity, the Gospel accounts also relate how the Lord began to deal with them as such. Hence, for example, when the Lord eventually appointed His twelve apostles He not only equipped them to function as apostles, but He also dealt with them in accordance with the governmental role that they would have in "the Israel of God" once the kingdom of heaven was established in the land. Therefore we read how that on one occasion the Lord said to Peter and the others,…

> 28 …, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

(Matthew 19:28b)

The twelve apostles, therefore, will be the tribal leaders of Israel; the righteous princes of "the Israel of God," when it as 'the nation of God's inheritance' is established in the land.

Moreover with the believing remnant being the conception of the righteous nation, and with the issue of possessing the "kingdom of heaven" being Israel's heritage according to the Abrahamic Covenant, the Lord also spoke to the whole remnant as "the Israel of God" that they

were. He spoke to them as the very ones to whom the kingdom rightfully belonged, saying, for example,…

> 32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

(Luke 12:32)

In addition to this when the conception of "the Israel of God" was completed, and the Lord returned to Jerusalem to fulfill the final aspect of His ministry before going back to the Father, He then pronounced to the leaders of apostate Israel exactly what was going to soon happen to them, being the apostate nation that they were.

> 43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

(Matthew 21:43)

"The kingdom of God," (which had been vested in the leaders of Israel since the time it was originally conceived in the days of the patriarchs and then later brought forth), would soon be "taken from" the apostate nation and it would be given to "a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." That "nation" was the believing remnant of Israel, which had by then been completely conceived as 'the nation of God's inheritance.' And in view of the fact that it was overwhelmingly composed of "no people" in the eyes of apostate Israel, it was also then ready to be looked upon as being nothing but a "foolish nation" in their eyes as well.

So it is then that as the Gospel accounts conclude their testimony, and as the time of the initial portion to the climactic stage in Israel's program drew to a close, all of the preparations for the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 32:21 were in place. God therefore was ready to provoke His nation to jealousy "by *them that are* no people"; and He was ready to anger them "by a foolish nation."

Moreover the time for the effectual working of Isaiah's special testimony and admonition was also then at hand. Isaiah's prophecy about God providing for Israel to see with their eyes and to hear with their ears, and passionately appealing to them as such, was then ready to be fulfilled. And this is just what took place during the time recorded in the opening chapters of Acts.

The Record of Acts 1–7

Though Acts 1–7 is replete with issues which testify to the fact that God's program with Israel was still in effect and on track following their rejection of Christ, we will simply note the reality of Deuteronomy 32:21 and Isaiah 65:1–2 coming to pass. And we do not need to look past Acts 2 to begin to see it. For when God baptized the remnant of Israel with the Holy Ghost, (and by so doing began to manifest to Israel that the "last days" of their program had arrived), at the same time He began 'provoking Israel to jealousy by them that are no people.' Moreover we find that God did this on a grand scale. For He did this to a world-wide gathering of Israel which was taking place in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. And because God was deliberately provoking Israel to jealousy by what He did, we read that Israel's *first* response was to express amazement at whom God was using. For they looked upon them as being "no people." Hence we read,…

> 7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?

(Acts 2:7)

Then shortly after this God turned His attention to apostate Israel's leadership, and He particularly provoked them to jealousy by focusing their attention upon the "no people" status of His apostles. Hence we read that when God did this, their *first* response also was to marvel at this.

> 13 Now when they (Israel's leaders) saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

(Acts 4:13)

Following this, and as it began to become evident to apostate Israel that they were powerless against the apostles and that 'the kingdom of God was being taken from them,' their jealousy gave way to anger. In other words they began to be 'angered by the foolish nation,' just as Deuteronomy 32:21 had foretold. Hence the account goes on to describe, for example, that…

> 17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,…

(Acts 5:17)

Then finally when the prophesied time and "day" of Deuteronomy 32:21 and Isaiah 65:1–2 drew to a close, God concluded it through Stephen by having him criminally indict apostate Israel. When this took place we read that…

> 54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth.

(Acts 7:54)

Now apostate Israel did all of these things, even though throughout this entire prophesied 'day of salvation' God had been completely upfront with them and merciful to them. For He had been doing the very things He had foretold them about in Deuteronomy 32:21. Moreover He had been passionately appealing to them in the very manner Isaiah had said, by 'all the day stretching forth His hands unto them' and mercifully giving "repentance to Israel," just as Peter and the other apostles had declared unto them in Acts 5:29–32.

The Poignant Question of Romans 10:19 Revisited

> 19 But I say, Did not Israel know? (Romans 10:19a)

In view of what Moses and Isaiah said, it is obvious that when Paul answered this question he did not choose these two passages randomly. Instead God had Paul specifically cite them because He had expressly designed them to effectually let Israel "know." Including even informing them in advance that this was what these very passages were for.

Wherefore Israel certainly did have the ability to "know"; no ifs, ands, or buts. Consequently they are indeed without excuse for not knowing what was going on, or for not knowing what was taking place, especially during the time of Acts 1–7.

The Same Poignant Question and Us Today

Now though the question — "Did not Israel know?" — specifically proves Israel to be without excuse, by extending its application it also does the same thing with us today. For as previously noted the same information that God gave to Israel so that they could clearly know what was taking place during the Gospels and Acts 1–7, (and be held responsible for it), is available to us to learn from as well. God has made it part of the very doctrine designed to establish us dispensationally.

Wherefore by way of extended application, (and particularly in view of the misunderstanding that many Christians have regarding the Gospels and the opening chapters of Acts), the same poignant question can be asked of us. *Do not Christians today know?* Or more pointedly, *Have not we also had ample opportunity to learn from Moses and Isaiah, and thereby should know what the Gospels and Acts 1–7 truly are all about?* And also, *Are not we responsible to learn this, with*

the result that we too are without excuse if we do not know the truth?

The answers to these questions are really no different from what was given to Israel. And they should have the same sort of sobering effect upon us as well. Yes, we too have the same knowledge given unto us about this particular time, along with the opportunity to learn the truth about it. And, yes, we too are responsible to learn it. And, yes, we too will be held accountable for it. And, yes, we too will be without excuse if we do not learn it.

Therefore we have no excuse for not "rightly dividing the word of truth" *precisely*; for not knowing the truth of what took place during the time of the Gospels and the opening chapters of Acts. We have no God-given reason for thinking that either Matthew through John, or the opening chapters of Acts, describe the beginning of this present dispensation of God's grace; or that the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 is the 'birthday of the church'; or any other similar thing. Instead what we have is a God-given reason for realizing that this is not so. With that God-given reason being the special testimony that He gave to Israel, clearly describing that time for what it would be in His program with them.

More Inexcusable

In fact the truth of the matter is that we today are *even more inexcusable,* so to speak, than Israel. For we not only have the ability to learn from the same two things that God gave to Israel, but we also have all of the further corroborating evidence and testimony contained in the record of the Gospels and Acts 1–7 themselves. Moreover we also have the testimony of Paul's own epistles to us, testifying on numerous occasions not only about the great dispensational change that God has made, but also when He made it. All of which makes us all the more inexcusable.

Yet though this is true, the simple truth remains that the two issues cited in Romans 10:19–21 are sufficient of themselves to render us to be without excuse, as they did Israel.

The Same Poignant Question and the Judgment Seat of Christ

The day is coming when at the judgment seat of Christ each of us as God's "sons" will give account of himself to God. What's more, because of the effectual working of Romans 9–11 God will have reason to pose this same kind of telling question — "Did not you know?" — to every Christian, who in his or her Christian life has either not been "rightly dividing the word of truth" *at all*, or has not been doing so *precisely*.

So then this begs the question, In that day will you be one to whom the Lord will say, "Did not you know?" If so, your reply, "No, I did not know"; or, "I just assumed that what I was taught was right"; will not be acceptable. For you are clearly without excuse. For by the effectual working of Romans 9–11 in general, and by the effectual working of Romans 10:19–21 in particular, God has not only provided for you to know that you must be "rightly dividing the word of truth," but He has also provided for you to know how to do it *precisely*.

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