



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

### Blindness in part has happened unto Israel, Romans 11:25-27 — part 1, by David Baron



David Baron was born in 1855 and died in 1926. He was a Jew well trained in Hebrew religion, culture and literature. After his conversion to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Messiah he became a greatly respected Bible teacher, sharing his unique insight into the Scriptures with his fellow Christians as well as exercising an effective missionary influence among his own people. Although the address, amplified in this booklet, was given early in the twentieth century, its message is still relevant and applicable today. May this exposition of the “gifts and calling of God which are

without repentance”, stir the hearts of Christians to praise the Lord for the unchanging Covenants of God, and quicken interest in the people still “beloved for the fathers’ sakes”. Part 2 of this article will follow next month, DV.

I want, by God’s help, to speak some very simple elementary truths - such that even the youngest believer can understand and lay hold of. I shall have occasion to refer to different parts of this chapter, but I want particularly to centre your thoughts in the first instance on these three verses. The first point I would beg you to notice is that this subject of Israel is one concerning which Christians cannot afford, for their own good, to be ignorant about. “I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery,” says the Apostle, “lest ye be wise in your own conceits.” Alas, the very danger which the Apostle foresaw, and concerning which he warns us, Christendom has fallen into. It has become wise in its own conceits, it is proud, it is boastful, it claims to have taken the place of Israel, and proclaims that it is making wonderful progress and that it is going to bring the world into the Kingdom of God; yet all the time it is itself corporately sinking deeper and deeper into apostasy. Would to God that Christendom had given heed to the warnings contained in this chapter, and had taken to heart God’s dealings with His own nation. It might then have been saved from falling into the great errors which characterise the professing Church of Christ. Remember, says the Apostle, in verses 21 and 22, “that if God spared not the natural branches, neither will He spare thee. 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.” Alas, Christendom has not continued in the goodness of God - namely, God’s marvellous grace which is revealed to us in our Lord Jesus Christ and which is made sure only to those who continue in the faith. The late Dr. Adolph Saphir used to say that Christendom which boasts so much of having taken the place of Israel, instead of



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being able to exercise any influence for Christ and His Gospel on the Jewish people, has itself fallen into the two outstanding errors of modern Judaism. The two great errors that characterise Rabbinic Judaism are these: first it exalts human tradition to the same level as the Word of God, and practically makes the Word of God of none effect by these traditions; and the second is an error of doctrine. "Being ignorant of the righteousness of God" - that is the justifying righteousness which God provides for sinful men, which must be received as a gift through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ - "they go about seeking to establish their own righteousness." Now these are also the outstanding errors of Christendom. Christendom, too, has made the Word of God of none effect by the traditions of men. This is especially the case with the great masses of those who are included in the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic Churches. There is a "Christian" Talmud which is as perverse of the Word of God as is the Talmud of the Rabbis. And Christendom too has made of Christianity a religion of works and practically teaches men to save themselves through their own good deeds and human merit. Truly Christendom has nothing to boast over Israel, and its apostasy is all the deeper because it is from greater light.

### THE MYSTERY OF ISRAEL

The second point I would ask you to notice is, that it is only from the Word of God that we can get true light and understanding about the Jewish people. "I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery." This word mystery in the New Testament stands for one of God's secrets — a secret which was not known, and which could not have been known, until God revealed it, but when once it is revealed it is no longer a secret, but is intended for all Christians, both to know and to believe it and to act in accordance with it. There are different mysteries spoken of in the New Testament. There is the great "mystery of godliness," viz. Christ. There is the mystery of the Church; there is the mystery of the resurrection; and there is also the "mystery of iniquity." All of which could not properly be known except they are revealed. So also is it with Israel. It is a subject which cannot be studied or grasped merely with the intellect. We have to believe and accept what God says about it whether we fully understand it or not. You may think that you know a good deal about the Jews; you may know something about them, so to say, outwardly; you may know something of their history and of their deplorable condition as a diaspora among the nations. You may be acquainted with some of their manners and customs; but truly to know and understand the Jews, you cannot apart from what God has revealed in His Word. What is their beginning and origin, why did God choose them? Why does He preserve them? What is the meaning of their present condition among the nations? What is to be the future of this peculiar people? All this you cannot properly know apart from the Word of God.

Now here, in chapters 9, 10 and 11 of this great Epistle, this mystery of God with Israel is unfolded by the inspired Apostle for the special instruction of Gentile believers, and one part of this God-revealed secret is that blindness in part has happened to Israel. I know that the word in the original ought, perhaps, to be more correctly rendered hardness - hardness in part has happened unto Israel; but I prefer the rendering in the Authorised Version, because it does very graphically express the present condition of the Jews. Blindness has come upon them. Oh, how terribly sad it is! They are, as a nation, blind in relation to God. In spite of the fact that the bulk of them are very religious, they do not know God. They are blind in relation to their own scriptures; they have the Old Testament in their hands, but they cannot understand what they read. Even to this day when Moses is



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read in the synagogues there is a veil on their hearts. They are blind in relation to their own condition, in that they do not realise that they are sinners. But the saddest symptom of Israel's blindness is that they cannot behold the glory of their own Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The present condition of the Jewish people is well illustrated by an incident which a friend of mine, a German pastor, related to me some years ago. He was staying in the house of a friend where there was a little boy, only some five or six years of age, who met with an accident and suddenly lost his sight - it was hoped only temporarily. But my friend said it was most pathetic, when the boy recovered from the first shock, to hear him cry: "Mother, Mother, when will it be day? why is the night so long?" And the mother did not have the heart at first to tell the child that it was day, but that something had happened to his eyes. When I heard this, I thought what an illustration of the present condition of the Jews. They too are smitten with temporary blindness; they too say, "When will it be day?" "We wait for the light," says the prophet Isaiah, "but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness." It is night to Israel, but it is not because there is no light. Blessed be God, to those whose eyes have been opened by the Spirit of God, it is day - ever since He came, Who cried in their midst: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

**To be continued next month.**