

The Name of God in Malachi

Part 1

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[00:00:01] Gospel by Luke chapter 21 and we'll read from verse 20.

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it depart out, and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days, for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. [00:01:02] And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea, and the waves roaring. Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them a parable, Behold the fig tree, and all the trees, when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when you see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

[00:02:05] Now we have other portions to read, but I think it's better just to take one portion at a time. The exercise tonight is to look at some statements which are very, very similar, but have many different meanings. And we want to begin tonight with the times of the Gentiles. We'll look a little at the signs of the times, and then the fullness of the time, and the fullness of the Gentiles, and end up with Ephesians 1, the fullness of the times.

Now, all these seem to be somewhat similar, but they all convey different truths. Now, a very careful reading of the passage that we've read together shows clearly, distinctly, that it has to do with the Jewish nation. Just let me point out the emphasis.

In verse 20, it is Jerusalem that is compassed with armies.

[00:03:11] All these references show clearly that the times of the Gentiles really have to do with Israel.

While it does indicate the predominance of the Gentile nations, it is those nations that are strictly in connection with Israel.

We know that there were great nations in many parts of the world that had no dealings whatsoever with Israel. Consequently, they are never mentioned. History will tell us of these great dynasties that existed in China, for instance, South America, and many other parts of the world, Africa too. [00:04:02] But those nations that were particularly connected with Jerusalem, these are the ones that are referred to in the times of the Gentiles. Now, we have to go to the Old Testament to know something about the beginning of the times of the Gentiles. We read of the complete failure of the nation of Israel.

Ten tribes, the northern kingdom, were scattered amongst the nations.

It had signally failed to represent God in any way whatsoever. If you read the history of these kings, not one king amongst the kings of Israel, that is the northern kingdom, did any good for God. They were all evil.

They all took character from Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made the children of Israel to sin.

When we come to the southern kingdom, we find a few good kings, those who did things that pleased the Lord, outstanding men, particularly like Hezekiah and Jehoshaphat. [00:05:10] But they too failed, failed very, very badly in connection with idolatry.

And so God sets aside his ancient people, Israel, and they had been blessed in order to take the foremost place in the world. They were to give a lead. God gave them wise laws.

God gave them the law so that they might be governed. And if they had obeyed that, then they could have given a lead to all the nations around them, and there would have been blessing. But they failed, the most favored nation in the universe at that time, blessed by God, given instructions by God, and yet they failed miserably.

Well then, God set them aside.

And if we read in the first chapter of Daniel, we'll read that God gave them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. [00:06:05] What we were saying last night, God, the supreme ruler in the universe. And he, because of the failure of Israel, gave the nation of Israel into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. Perhaps it's more accurate to say the southern kingdom into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. Well, there we find the beginning of the times of the Gentiles.

Nebuchadnezzar was a very great man, and we're very, very thankful that he got converted. He was a wicked man in many ways, but God set him up and told him, you are the head of gold. That is, you're the best form of government. And in one sense, Nebuchadnezzar prefigures the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was a notocrat in the fullest sense of the word. Whom he would, he slew.

Whom he would, he kept alive. He had no committee, no parliament, no company of persons controlling him and telling him what to do. [00:07:06] He did what he wanted to do. And of course, if he'd been a good ruler all along the line, he would have been a tremendous ruler. But he failed, as all the different rulers fail.

So at the beginning, we find Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold, set up in government upon the earth. And that was his function, to maintain a measure of good rule upon earth that anarchy and wickedness might be curtailed, might be curbed. And you remember when Daniel spoke to him, Daniel reproved him. He says, now cast off your wickedness, be kind to the poor. And in these two simple statements, we find the responsibility of Nebuchadnezzar to curb evil and to do good.

But he failed.

But as we said, we are very thankful he got converted. But the time came when his kingdom crumbled and fell.

[00:08:02] And so the kingdom made way for another ruler, the Medes and the Persians. And then again, the Grecian kingdom.

And then the Roman kingdom.

And then finally, the end of the times of the Gentiles.

We find that there is a stone cut out without hands from the mountain. And it smites the great image, the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, smote it at its feet. The feet mingled with clay and iron, weak. And then the whole thing came tumbling down and it was blown away like the chaff on the threshing floor. I don't know a better description and the complete removal of all that man has stood for down through the ages than that statement. It was all blown away like the chaff of the summer threshing floor. It simply means that all the culture, all the intellect, all the power that man has accumulated for himself down through the centuries is put away in one moment of divine power and glory. [00:09:07] And of course we find this in this chapter. Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Power and great glory.

Now there's one thing that we must emphasize and it's stated here, verse 24. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

When we look at history, both in the Bible and in secular history, we'll find that this is true. That Jerusalem was captured, trodden down, destroyed again and again by the Gentile powers.

At the present moment it might be said, well look, Israel possesses Jerusalem today. Is there not a difference? And we say no, there's no difference. [00:10:01] Jerusalem is in the hands of the Jews today, but it's a very, very unstable possession. Well they know that they're surrounded by powerful enemies. Well they know that if the power and influence of other nations were to be withdrawn, they would be in dire straits indeed. Very, very insecure possession they have at the moment. And of course when we come to the end, we'll see clearly that God will have the same feature connected with Jerusalem.

It tells us in the book of Zechariah in chapter 12 and in chapter 14 that God, God will bring all the nations to come and find themselves grouped around Jerusalem.

Just a little bit of explaining and I'll try and do it very, very briefly. Israel, and especially the apostate

part of Israel, will make a covenant with the head of the revived Roman Empire.

[00:11:08] It's the only place where they can find safety, humanly speaking. There's no help from the king of the north, he's very much against them. There's no help from the king of the south, he's very much against them. And there's no help from the kings of the east, they're very much against them. Where can they look? Only to the west. And so they make this covenant.

After a short time, space about three and a half years, the king breaks off that covenant, breaks the covenant. And there they are, they're left defenseless. And I believe it's round about that period that the increasing activity and enmity rises against Israel. And finds its culmination at Armageddon when they all gather together, all the nations, in hatred against Israel. And particularly against the city of Jerusalem.

[00:12:02] And God, at that precise moment, brings to pass his will and purpose in the destruction of all those powers, whatever they might be.

And he does that by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and in glory.

We read about it in Revelation chapter 19, marvellous description of the coming of Christ, power and glory. And he destroys all those evil powers that are set against Israel.

We read again about it in Zechariah, when his feet touch the Mount of Olives. And deliverance comes for particularly Judah.

Judah is saved first.

The nation of Judah, the nation that was always first in the mind of God. Right on from the time when Judah was surety for his brother Joseph. But dear friends, oh how wonderful to see that God has everything in control.

[00:13:01] Nothing will be allowed to get out of control. Everything is safe in the hands of God, in the hands of Christ. And to go back to Daniel chapter 2, the stone cut out without hands, smites the image at its feet. And it's all brought down to smithereens and blown away, all that man boasts of. And according to Isaiah chapter 2, the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.

And all the boasted glory and culture and intellect of the Gentiles comes to naught.

It's important to see, and I think we mentioned this last night, that the times of the Gentiles began with idolatry and with violence.

The idolatry we see when Nebuchadnezzar set up the great image on the plain of Dura and ordered everyone to bow down. And if they didn't bow down then they would be killed. So we find the two things linked there, idolatry and violence. [00:14:04] And the times of the Gentiles will end in idolatry and violence.

If you turn to Revelation chapter 13, we find there the image of the beast that is set up must be worshipped. And those who do not worship will be slain. So there again we find at the very end, in its most complete form, this awful spirit of idolatry and this awful spirit of violence. Now make no

mistake, the culture of this world at the present moment is definitely heading in that direction.

The deification of man.

Not an idol, a wooden idol to bow down, or stocks and stones, however gilded and beautiful. But man, man sets himself up to be worshipped.

And God will deal with that in power and in glory.

Now I want to say this dear friends, that if we read prophecy simply as great events at certain dates and epochs, then we are missing the whole point. [00:15:09] Christ is the very substance of prophecy.

We see everything fulfilled in him.

And as we love him and respect him and worship him, then we see in him the hope of this world. He is the one who will come to bring order out of chaos, to bring blessing out of sorrow, and to bring a response for God out of the lips and lives of men and women upon earth. Praise God the church will be with him then. So if we keep that in mind that the times of the Gentiles have to do with government upon earth. And when all have failed, Israel has failed, the Gentiles have failed, God sets up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed. And it's Christ who is at the head of that kingdom. Now we move over to Matthew chapter 16.

[00:16:01] As we go along, if any questions arise in your mind, then we can have a few moments at the end.

If anyone wants to ask questions, we'll try and answer them if we can. Matthew 16 verse 1.

The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came and tempting desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven.

He answered and said unto them, when it is evening you say it will be fair weather for the sky is red. And in the morning it will be foul weather today for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, but can you not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonas. [00:17:01] And he left them and departed.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 that the Jews require a sign.

They always wanted something visible to convince them that what was happening was of God. They desired this of the prophets and many others and they desired it of the Lord Jesus. They asked him for a sign and it was always to indicate that he was the sent one. But the Lord Jesus says these people were so wicked and blind that they couldn't even discern the signs of the times. Now I'm not quite sure if I understand what those signs are, but I'm going to make two suggestions. The first sign is a negative one, is one that they should have taken account of with humility. That is that they were under the heel of Rome. Now that should have spoken to them loudly. God had said in his word that they would be the head and not the tail. [00:18:03] They would not be in bondage to anyone. They claimed that, but of course it was a false claim. Fact is that because of their unfaithfulness they were now in this terrible position. They were under the bondage of Rome.

Now that should have spoken to them very, very loudly indeed. Should have brought home to them the knowledge that yes, they were guilty and they should have been humble about it. They should have recognized it. They should have owned it and then blessing would have come. Instead of that they were proud legalists. They were hypocrites, the Lord said so. A wicked and adulterous generation.

The second sign, I believe the most powerful, a positive one, was that in the person of the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, they saw the signs of the Messiah enacted before their eyes.

They saw the one most wonderful teaching, or rather they heard the most wonderful teaching that ever fell from the lips of any man. [00:19:06] And they also saw the powers of the Messiah, the powers of the kingdom, enacted by him. You know that in the Gospel by Matthew, chapters 5, 6 and 7, is the king in the midst of his subjects laying down the principles of his kingdom. And when we come to chapters 8 and 9, we have the king in power showing the powers of the kingdom, helping his subjects in their weakness. Now that should have been a voice to the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The greatness and demonstration of the king in their presence, demonstrating who he was by what he said and what he did. But they hadn't eyes to see it. Now it might be that there are many more signs that they should have taken account of, but it seems to me one a negative one, the other a positive one, should have been very much in their hearts and minds if they had had the eyes to see it. [00:20:01] But, says the Lord Jesus, no sign shall be given to them except the sign of Jonas, and that was the death, his own death and resurrection. And so dear friends, the signs of the times were things that the people, particularly the Sadducees and the Pharisees, should have known. They should have known from their own scriptures that the person who was amongst them was the fulfillment of what was in the prophecies. Now if you want to prove this, there are two portions that you can turn to when you have the time. And in Isaiah 11, we find that the Messiah has the spirit upon him, spirit of knowledge, the spirit of wisdom and understanding. And all that came out in the teaching of the Lord Jesus. And then if you turn to Isaiah chapter 35, we find that the lame are healed, the blind are healed, and we find a great catalogue of persons who are healed in power by the Messiah. [00:21:01] This is all prophesied centuries before the Lord Jesus came.

So these are two prophecies, and there were many many more of course, two prophecies that distinctly showed what the Messiah would be when he was amongst his people. But they failed to take account of the signs of the times.

They were so materialistic minded that they could discern the signs of the skies, they could take account of these things, that was simple.

What they should have been able to discern was the signs of the times, and they failed in that. And that was very very sad indeed.

Now we move over to Galatians chapter 4.

Galatians chapter 4 and verse 1.

Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all, but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. [00:22:13] Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them

that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father, wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son. And if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Paul here is referring to those in the nation of Israel who were looked upon as children, immature children, not having reached an age of responsibility.

[00:23:12] And because of that they were under tutors, they were under persons who looked after their own person and after their own property. Now he is referring simply to the law, that the children of Israel were under the law until a particular moment. He is using the figure of a little boy, although he might be the heir to the throne, he might be lord of all. He is a little boy and he is immature and persons are placed over him to discipline him and to teach him and to take care of him until the appropriate moment comes when he enters into what belongs to him when he reaches full age. Now, says Paul, this is the figure that I want to employ to show that there came a precise moment when God sent his son.

[00:24:01] That this condition of immaturity might be put away forever and we might be brought into the position of sons in the full knowledge and enjoyment of it and also in what belongs to sonship, heirship. And given the ability to respond to God in exactly the same way as God's own son did when he was here upon earth saying, Abba, Father. Now then, that's a very, very wonderful thing. But what we are particularly concerned about is the fullness of the time. It wasn't a chance thing, the sending of the son into this world. It was a precise moment in time arranged by the father in relation to the blessing of men and women through his son.

Everything was just right at that particular moment.

The rule of Rome, the virgin in a particular place, and the son coming as he did come as a little babe, made of a woman, made under the law. [00:25:07] Son of man, if you like, son of David. But behind it all, undergirding these things, in power and glory, the son of God. And he comes into the world in order to bring to pass the great thoughts of God. Dear brother George Davidson often told us, God was never in a crisis, never.

God is never forced into a certain position to do things. He takes his own time.

He works according to his own will, his own purpose. And in this, the greatest moment in the history of time, the son came.

Make no mistake about it, this is the greatest moment in the history of time when the son became a little babe. Now I can't understand that.

Nobody can.

Any endeavor to peer into it, how he who is God the son can come into the compass of a little babe, is beyond human understanding.

[00:26:09] But that's what the Bible teaches. And when we begin to peer into the fact of one who is God and man at the same time, one who is God cannot be anything less than God.

And yet at the same time accepts a place of limitation, if we try and peer into that, we'll be sure to fall into error. But the Bible explains it for us, tells us that it was a fact, the fullness of the time, at that particular moment in the history of time, God sent forth his son. We might almost say that heaven was waiting with bated breath for that particular moment. For from the beginning, the creation of Adam and Eve, up to that precise moment, it was one long history of failure.

God endeavoring to bless men, men turning away from God, no matter how he blessed them. [00:27:06] Very, very sad.

And oh how wonderful that heaven could look on to that little babe coming into this world and knowingly say, there is the cure for all man's ills. There is the one in whose hands God will place everything.

There is the one who will die, mystery of all mysteries, there is the one who will die on the cross and bring to pass the great thoughts of God. And so if we connect all these things together, the incarnation, which simply means clothing with flesh, the incarnation, most wonderful life, perfect life, the death and resurrection and ascension of Christ, oh how wonderful they are. But I believe in my heart, and you tell me if I'm wrong, that I believe that the incarnation is the greatest of all. [00:28:01] Everything else, of course, flows out from that. There could be no death on the cross if there were no incarnation. There could be no perfect life without the incarnation. There could be no resurrection without the incarnation. There would be no blessing at all without the incarnation. And so the coming of the son is this great event in the history of time.

Indeed, it should bow us before God in worship.

That God had this great plan before him before our time began.

God knew that this was the way in which these evil things would be dealt with by his son. And he came, and oh how wonderful.

The great object was to receive sons. Now I want to make this plain. When I'm talking about immature children, I'm not talking about the blessing of children that God gives to us through new birth. Not at all.

The figure that's implied here of the immature child is simply Israel under the law.

[00:29:04] But when we read about new birth, and we are children of God, we are not immature children. We are children according to the mind of God, possessed of a new nature, and indwelt by the spirit to express that new nature. So there's nothing immature about that. That there is growth, of course, is beyond doubt in the family of God. 1 John chapter 2 tells us that.

Where we have babes, and we have young men, and we have fathers. But oh dear friends, this is a wonder here, that the son became a man in order that men might become sons. It's as simple as that.

And yet when I say simple, it's a marvel. And look what it says, that to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Now I think we mentioned about this when we were talking about redeeming the time. The word here for redemption is that we are redeemed out of

the slave market, never to return. [00:30:05] There is a form of redemption that simply means we are bought over by another.

And of course Christ is our master, graciously bought us that we might be for him. And that's a very wonderful thing. But this is a very strong word. This is an added emphasis that you're bought out of the slave market.

Redeeming them out of the slave market. That they might never return to it in order to enjoy the position of sons. And not only have we been given the position of sons, but God has placed the spirit of his son in our hearts. So that we're able to address God in exactly the same way as his son did. Now nobody here would presume to have the feelings that the son had or be able to address the father as the son did.

[00:31:01] It would be sheer presumption and arrogance to make a claim like that. At the same time, in character, praise God, we can address the father in the same way as the son did. We address him as father because we have this wonderful relationship. Tremendous thing to consider. That poor creatures like ourselves, in the gain of redemption, taken away from sin and every conceivable form of wickedness. Whatever it might be, through the death of our Lord Jesus, should be indwelt by the spirit to speak to God in a way that brings him pleasure. This, in this context, was the great object of the fullness of the time.

If you read through the New Testament, you will find that there are many, many portions that speak about the incarnation. And different contexts, of course, bring forward different truths. And we've always been taught, and it's well worth remembering, that it's wise to keep truth in its proper context. [00:32:04] Don't get things mixed up. If the spirit of God stresses a certain truth in a certain place, don't mix it up with another truth. Keep things in their context, and then they'll become clear. A great deal of damage has been caused by getting things mixed up and things taken out of perspective. So here, the great object of the fullness of the time is this particular blessing that we might be sons.

Now, we move over to Romans chapter 11.

Romans chapter 11, and we'll read from verse 25.

[00:33:12] As it is written, In this wonderful book, the Epistle to the Romans, Paul describes in a very, very careful way the righteousness of God expressed in salvation.

How he can take ungodly man out of his condition and bless him and bring him into a place of nearness. [00:34:04] And Romans chapter 5 reminds us of the complete recovery of man to God.

He's away from God, he's a hater of God, pleases himself, gets into every conceivable form of wickedness, and God says, I'm going to bless him. And so we read from Paul, being justified freely by his grace, by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, man is set up in righteousness before God. And in chapter 5, he reaches this point that not only is he happy about being saved, but he's boasting in God. My, that's a wonderful point to reach. I wonder, do we boast in God? We're just happy that our sins are forgiven and we're going home to heaven? Precious thing, that. Wonderful thing. But my, to boast in God is something more. To boast in the God who has brought this great salvation. So in the end of that portion, the person brought to God is boasting in him. [00:35:04] That's man's recovery to God. But then when we come to chapter 8, we get why man has been recovered to God. That God

will not be satisfied until we're all home in glory, conformed to the image of his son. That there might eternally be a response to him. Now in chapters 9, 10, and 11, we find a change.

Paul's not talking about sin and sins as such as a doctrine.

He's not talking about justification. He's talking about his own kinsmen according to the flesh, Jews. Paul was a Jew, brought up as a Jew, educated as a Jew, and then the Lord saved him. And now he's talking about his people, the nation of Israel. Why should he do this? Well, it's quite simple to understand. Those persons who were Jews, who were converted, they can turn around to Paul and say, Now look here, Paul. All that you're talking about, Jews and Gentiles being all guilty before God, we'll accept that. [00:36:05] We accept that. That's perfectly true. But what about those wonderful prophecies made about our nation? In the Old Testament, in Isaiah, in Daniel, in Jeremiah, in Ezekiel, all the prophecies, tremendous prophecies are mentioned about Israel. You're telling us that there's no difference between Jew and Gentile. They're all the same, all guilty before God. Now explain to us about these prophecies. What's going to happen? Oh, he says that's very, very simple. And so in these three chapters, he goes over the ground with them and he explains to them that the nation of Israel is not cast away forever. They're cast aside at the moment because of their unfaithfulness. But the time will come when they'll all be brought back. All Israel shall be saved and shall occupy the place that God intended for them. Now we can understand the Jew saying, Paul, how can that be?

[00:37:06] And let us go back to what we said at the very beginning. That all prophecy finds its center in Christ.

And in these three chapters, we see clearly how everything centers in him. Chapter nine tells us about the deity and the incarnation of Christ.

The one who is God over all, blessed forever, and the one who came born into the Jewish nation in the flesh.

When we come to chapter 10, Paul tells us about his death and his resurrection, and especially bearing in relation to the Jews. If thou shalt confess Jesus Christ as Lord and believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. I believe particular reference to the nation of Israel, but nevertheless, thank God, we use it today with power. And many souls have found blessing as a result of it. [00:38:01] Is that all? No, we've read in this portion that the Deliverer shall come out of Zion. That in Jerusalem, the Deliverer will come forth to the aid of his people and bless them. So there we have the wonderful unfolding of the prophecy in relation to the Jews. But, says Paul, that won't be until the fullness of the Gentiles is fulfilled.

What does he mean?

It's certainly not the times of the Gentiles, because that ends in judgment.

Paul is not referring to judgment when he speaks about the fullness of the Gentiles. We believe he's referring to the assembly that predominantly is made up of Gentiles.

Some time ago, I was speaking in a little meeting, and there was a brother there. I knew I hadn't seen him before, but after the meeting, he came forward and he explained that he was a converted Jew.

[00:39:01] He had trusted the Lord many years before and was very interested in the Lord's work among the Jews. He told me that there are 3,000 converted Jews in this country.

Well, that's something to thank God for. And also, there are at least 100,000 Jews converted in America.

Real, believing Jews.

But having said that, if you take account of all the people who have formed the church down through the ages, without question, they've been drawn from the nations. Have we a scripture to back that up? And we have. That in the Acts of the Apostles, you remember James said at the Council in Jerusalem, that God had decided to take out of the nations a people for his name.

That doesn't mean that there are no Jews in the church, or there were no Jews in the church. 3,000 were saved on the day of Pentecost, and many more later on. But down through the ages, the main personnel of the church, they've been drawn from the nations. [00:40:05] Drawn from the Gentiles. And we believe that's what is meant by the fullness of the Gentiles. And when that is fulfilled, when the last one is brought in, and it's complete, the church will be brought home to glory. And let's remember this, dear friends. The Lord's not going to come for the church when everything is so upside down, and so wicked and evil, that it will be a mercy, although that's true in Jude's epistle, it will be a mercy to be taken home to glory. That's true.

But the main thing is, when the church is complete, when the last soul has been gathered in, and the church is complete, the fullness of the Gentiles is complete, then the church will be gathered home. Well then, when the church goes home to be with Christ, the times, I should say rather, the church period is finished, and then Israel will be brought back to God.

The simple illustration has been used quite often. That Israel was on the main line of God's purpose and will on this earth, [00:41:05] and because of failure, they were shunted onto a sideline to await until God would bring them back on again. The church occupied the main line of testimony upon earth, and it's good to remember that Romans 9, 10, and 11 have to do with testimony upon earth. And when the church is taken away, then Israel is shunted back onto the main line and is here for God. Simple illustration, but it illustrates the truth. And so the fullness of the Gentiles is really the completion of the church period when Israel will be brought in again. Now we have just a few moments for Ephesians 1.

Ephesians 1 and verse 9.

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 fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, [00:42:07] both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him.

There are many more things we could have read in this portion, but that will do. The fullness of the times.

My, it's wonderful to think that everything in which man has failed will find its function and fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ when God heads up all things in him.

If we go back to the figure of Nebuchadnezzar, he was supreme on the earth at that moment. All nations gave him their allegiance.

It will be that in the coming day when the Lord Jesus Christ is supreme in the earth.

Publicly owned and God has placed in him all that is precious and all that is real.

[00:43:02] If we go right back to the beginning in Adam. Adam was Lord of all that he surveyed. It was there given to him. It was under his control and guidance and he failed. He forfeited that position. If we think of Noah, God put rule into his hands. How to rule the world after the awful time of judgment and he failed. If we think of kingship, that comes to light in the nation of Israel and that failed. If we think of priesthood in Aaron, that failed.

Anything you like to think of in relation to man failed and failed miserably. Now says God, I've got the answer.

He says in the fullness of the times, I'll head up all things in Christ.

The things in the heavens and the things in the earth. And every feature that man failed in will find its perfection in Christ.

In rule, in administration, in kingship and in lordship and too in priesthood.

[00:44:05] He'll reign upon his throne, priest and king. And every feature will be filled out in perfection for the glory of God and for the blessing of man. Our sins or died that our sins might be forgiven. We might be well content with that. And that's a very, very precious thing indeed. That our sins are forgiven and we're going home to glory. But don't let's stop there. There is so much that is in the hands of Christ. Father loves the son and given all things to be in his hand. And you remember another figure when Pharaoh told Joseph that he was to ride in the second chariot. And all were to bow down and acclaim him as the ruler next to Pharaoh.

Just a little figure of what it will be when Christ is supreme. And all will be administered for the glory of God and for the blessing of humanity. [00:45:03] The fullness of the times. That is he'll give a fullness to it that was lacking. Lacking because of the failure of man. He'll give a completeness to it that will satisfy God and be a blessing to mankind. And again I say how great he is.

So at the end of the time if what I've said this evening has raised any queries. Or if you think I've said anything wrong. Don't be afraid to say so. But there will be a time surely for a few minutes to ask questions or to say anything. May the Lord help us to understand how great the Lord is.

Now we end by singing number 7.

As we said we are not professed to be Solomon. But if there are any questions we'd be honoured to please try and help where we can. I was going to ask, you spoke about Israel being shunted back on the main line.

[00:46:07] Yes. And then you get that phrase all Israel shall be saved. Yes. Could you explain what that actually means? Well it certainly doesn't mean that every Jew will be saved.

Because there will be apostate Jews at that time. And they'll be dealt with by the Lord when he comes in power and glory.

But we read in Zechariah that Judah first shall be saved.

And we believe that the tribe of Judah resident in Jerusalem the faithful part will be saved. And we believe after the kingdom is set up the Lord will call from the four corners of the earth. The other tribes that have been scattered and peeled amongst the nations. After the millennium is set up they'll be called. He'll fish them if you like or draw them with hooks and he'll bring them to himself. [00:47:01] And so all Israel shall be saved. There won't be a tribe wanting.

That's what it means.

Thank you.

[00:48:06] Thank you.

Thank you.

[00:49:06] Thank you.