



The Epistle to the Romans

Lesson Number 36



THE REJECTION THAT IS NOT FINAL

11:11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. ¹² Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! ¹³ For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, ¹⁴ if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ¹⁶ For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. ¹⁷ And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹ You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." ²⁰ Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. ²² Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. ²³ And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴ For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? ²⁵ For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;" ²⁷ For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins." ²⁸ Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, ³¹ even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. ³² For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. ³³ Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! ³⁴ "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?" ³⁵ "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" ³⁶ For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen. – Romans 11:11-36 – NKJV

INTRODUCTION

DIVINE PURPOSE

God works according to His own established purpose. The "great salvation" of men is itself referred to as God's "eternal purpose which He **purposed** in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph 3:11). The

culmination of that glorious salvation, of which we have been made partakers, is called "His good pleasure which He hath **purposed** in Himself" (Eph 1:9). In Christ Jesus, "we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated

according to the **purpose** of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph 1:11). When the Holy Spirit challenges us to consider our own participation in this salvation, He reminds us that God "hath saved us, and called us

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. HAVE THEY STUMBLING IN ORDER TO FALL? (11:1)
- II. RICHES THROUGH THEIR FALL (11:12)
- III. THE MINISTRY OF PAUL (11:13-14)
- IV. RECONCILIATION THROUGH CASTING AWAY (11:15)
- V. THE FIRSTFRUIT AND THE LUMP (11:16)
- VI. ONLY SOME WERE BROKEN OFF (11:17)
- VII. DO NOT BOAST! DO NOT BOAST! (11:18-19)
- VIII. THINK AGAIN (11:20-21)
- IX. GOODNESS AND SEVERITY CONSIDERED (11:22)
- X. GOD IS ABLE (11:23)
- XI. DIVINE GRAFTING (11:24)
- XII. BLINDNESS IN PART (11:25-27)
- XIII. ENEMIES, YET BELOVED (11:28-29)
- XIV. DISOBEDIENCE AND MERCY (11:30-31)
- XV. THAT HE MIGHT HAVE MERCY (11:32)
- XVI. AN EXPRESSION OF PRAISE (11:33-36)

with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own **purpose** and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim 1:9). When Jesus came into the world, it was according to God's "purpose" more than according to our need! From this perspective, it is written, "For this **purpose** the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

When referring to the demise of the Assyrian empire, God declared His irrevocable purpose. "The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. This is **the purpose** that is **purposed** upon the whole earth: and this

is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the LORD of hosts hath **purposed**, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (Isa 14:14:24-27). The withering of Egypt was also related to Divine purpose (Isa 19:12). When He spoke of the doom of Tyre, He said He had "**purposed**" to stain its pride (Isa 23:9).

God declares that what He purposes, He does (Isa 46:11). He hurls this challenge into the face of His enemies: "I work and who can hinder it?" ^{NRSV} (Isa 43:13). When He purposes something He declares, "I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Isa 46:11). Again He affirms, "Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isa 14:24). Even that mysterious prophet Balaam could not help but speak the truth on this matter. "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Num 23:19).

Scripture anchors us to the purpose of God. Through Moses and the Prophets the Lord acquaints us with this Divine manner, namely that of purpose. When He purposed to make a great nation of Abraham, He did. When He purposed to deliver His people from Israel, He did. When He purposed the Babylonian captivity it came. When He purposed the end of that captivity, it came at precisely the right time. When He purposed to send His Son into the world, destroy the works of the devil, and open a way to Himself, it came to pass. He has purposed the end of the world, and it will come. He has purposed that all men will stand before Him to be judged, and they will. He has purposed that whoever comes to the Son will not be cast away, and they will not. God's "purpose" cannot be annulled by men!

IS THIS REALLY RELEVANT?

It may appear as though all of this has little relevance to our subject. **However, this chapter is bathed in the language of Divine purpose!** When God announces His intentions, and declares His purpose, we must set our hearts to anticipate its fulfillment. Ponder

these expressions, all of which declare Divine intent. None of these things could occur independently of God. All of them rely upon His ability, and His alone.

- "They stumbled" (11a). ^{NKJV}
- "Salvation has come to the Gentiles" (11b). ^{NKJV}
- "Provoke them to jealousy" (11c). ^{NKJV}
- "Their fall" (12a). ^{NKJV}
- "Riches for the world" (12b). ^{NKJV}
- "Their failure" (12c). ^{NKJV}
- "Riches for the Gentiles" (12d). ^{NKJV}
- "Their fulness" (12e). ^{NKJV}
- "Their being cast away" (15a). ^{NKJV}
- "The reconciling of the world" (15b). ^{NKJV}
- "Their acceptance" (15c). ^{NKJV}
- "Life from the dead" (15d). ^{NKJV}
- "The firstfruit is holy" (16a). ^{NKJV}
- "The lump is also holy" (16b). ^{NKJV}
- "The root is holy" (16c). ^{NKJV}
- "So are the branches" (16d). ^{NKJV}
- "Some of the branches were broken off" (17a). ^{NKJV}
- "You, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them" (17b). ^{NKJV}
- "With them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree" (17c). ^{NKJV}
- "You do not support the root, but the root supports you" (18). ^{NKJV}
- "Because of unbelief they were broken off" (20a). ^{NKJV}
- "You stand by faith" (20b). ^{NKJV}
- "And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in" (23a). ^{NKJV}
- "God is able to graft them in again" (23b). ^{NKJV}
- "How much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?" (24). ^{NKJV}
- "Blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (25). ^{NKJV}
- "All Israel will be saved" (26a). ^{NKJV}
- "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (26b). ^{NKJV}
- "For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins" (27). ^{NKJV}
- "Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake" (28a). ^{NKJV}
- "Concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers" (28b). ^{NKJV}
- "For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (29). ^{NKJV}
- "You were once disobedient to God,

yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience” (30).^{NKJV}

- *“Even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy” (31).^{NKJV}*
- *“For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all” (32).^{NKJV}*

Not a recap of history

This chapter is not a mere recap of history. It is not an academic record of what happened among men. This is the language of Divine purpose, and it recounts what God has done. Whether it was the cutting off of some of the Jewish branches, or the grafting in of some Gentile branches, it is God that has done it! None of these things could have happened without the Lord. All of them are, by their very proclamation, related to His purpose, which is woven throughout them. In this passage God is revealing how He is executing His purpose.

Not the suggestion of possibilities

This section of Scripture is not the expression of philosophy, or the suggestion of mere possibilities. If it were not for the “*eternal purpose*” of God, none of these things would have taken place, and none of the events would have been put into writing. In these words, we are beholding the working of the Lord!

SCRIPTURE ANCHORS US TO GOD’S PURPOSE

It is fundamental to a valid understanding that Scripture anchors us to the purpose of God. It all begins in Genesis when God announced WHY man was made (Gen 1:26-27). It continues by telling us WHY the curse of God came and man was expelled from the Garden (Gen 3:14-19). God told Noah WHY the world was going to be destroyed (Gen 6:13). He told Abraham WHY He called Him (Gen 12:1-3). It is God’s manner to not only purpose, but to announce that purpose.

When you read the Word of God with His purpose in mind, you gain such profit and understanding as is not otherwise possible. This is one of the great

ministries of the Apostles and Prophets, who are related to the foundation upon which we are built (Eph 2:20). Their role was not simply to outline the duty of men. Rather, they opened up what God had intended and how it was fulfilled in Christ Jesus. It is the comprehension of that purpose that produces maturity in the believer. Thus it is written, “*that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth*

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and height; to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge”^{NKJV} (Eph 3:71-19).

Salvation in all of its aspects is “*according to His purpose*” (Rom 8:28). It is “*the purpose of God*” that stands (Rom 9:11), and is being brought to fulfillment by the Lord Himself. He “*works all things according to the counsel of His will*” (Eph 1:11).

Does Not Make Salvation Impersonal

Let no one imagine that all of this makes salvation impersonal. It does not exclude the desires of men, nor does it suggest they will be blessed independently of their involvement. The very fact that God has revealed these things confirms our involvement in them, else there would be no reason to make them known to us. Knowing of the Lord’s purpose and His intent to fulfill it, builds our faith and gives us reason to hope in Him.

A PURPOSE FOR ISRAEL

Before beginning the exposition of this section, it is necessary to confirm that God has revealed His intentions for Israel.

It is against the backdrop of this revelation that our text obtains significance.

God will gather the remnant.

“And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase” (Jer 23:3).

They will find the Lord.

“And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive” (Jer 29:14).

God will bring them again.

“Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: and they shall be my people, and

I will be their God: and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me” (Jer 32:37-10).

They will come with weeping.

“Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and

ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he” (Jer 31:8-11).

God will circumcise their hearts.

“That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: and the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day” (Deut 30:3-8).

God will give them one heart and a new spirit. “Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh” (Ezek 11:17-19).

God will not hide His face from

them any more. “When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies’ lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; then shall they know that I am the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD” (Ezek 29:27-28).

Never again will they be pulled out of their land. “And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God” (Amos 9:15-15).

God will make them a name and praise among the people of the earth. “Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD” (Zeph 3:19-20).

HAVE THESE PROMISES BEEN ABROGATED?

Some teach that all of these promises

(and many more) have been abrogated because of the unbelief of Israel. However, if this is true, the thread of Divine promise has been broken, and we are thrust out upon the sea of uncertainty. The words of the Prophets have then failed. The promises of God have tumbled to the ground, and the door of doubt has been opened wide.

Under such a circumstance, we are faced with a God whose purposes are frustrated, **even though He has revealed such a thing is not possible.** Thus God would have been misrepresented to us by the holy prophets. The absurdity of such a postulate is revealed in the pivotal promise spoken by Peter at the threshold of the “day of salvation.” “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, **whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began**” (Acts 3:19-21).

Those who affirm Israel is totally rejected have, by virtue of that affirmation, said the Jews are unrelated to “the restoration of all things.” Thus, they have carved out for themselves a gargantuan task they cannot fulfill. Yet, they are under obligation to prove what they say, for they have spoken for the Almighty. Our text will reveal how foolish such a postulate is. It will relate Israel to the revealed purpose of God, affirming that they will yet be delivered from their sin, to the glory of God.

HAVE THEY STUMBLERD IN ORDER TO FALL?

“^{11:11} **I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.**”

The present condition of Israel has been vividly described.

It has not obtained what it sought for

- (11:7).
- Apart from “the elect” among them, “the rest were blinded” (11:7b).
- God has given them “the spirit of slumber” (11:8a).
- God has given them eyes that “they should not see” (11:8b).
- God has given them ears “that they should not hear” (11:8c).

- Their table has become “a snare and a trap to them” (11:9a).
- Their table has become a “stumbling block and a retribution to them” (11:9b).
- Their eyes are “darkened so they cannot see” (11:10a).
- Their backs “bowed down always” (11:10b).

To some, this is the language of utter hopelessness. And, indeed, if you take God and His purpose out of the picture, these words do paint a vivid portrait of hopelessness and futility. However, God is not out of the picture. **What is more, the Spirit will show us there is Divine strategy in the present condition of Israel.**

WE SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED!

We should not be surprised by the line of reasoning to which we are now subjected – particularly we Gentiles. Were we not in a hopeless state? Ponder again what the Spirit said of the Gentile world.

- When they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God (1:21a).
- They were not thankful (1:21b).
- They became vain in their imaginations (1:21c).
- Their foolish hearts were darkened (1:21d).
- They became fools (1:22).
- They changed the glory of God (1:23).
- God gave them up to uncleanness (1:24).
- They changed the truth of God into a lie (1:25a).
- They worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator (1:25b).
- God gave them up to vile affections (1:26).
- Their women, in sodomy, conducted themselves “against nature” (1:27a).
- Their men burned in their lust toward one another, committing what is shameful (1:27b).
- They did not like to retain God in their knowledge (1:28a).
- God gave them over to a reprobate mind (1:28b).
- They became filled with all unrighteousness (1:29-31).
- They knew the judgment of God was against such things, but did them anyway, approving of others who did the same (1:32).

Is there a Christian person in the world who is willing to affirm the bleak condition of the Gentile world meant there was not salvation for them? Such a

postulation is evidence of gross stupidity that even fools are unwilling embrace.

And if there was recovery for the Gentiles, for the depraved Gentiles, delivered over to a reprobate mind by God Himself, what spirit will move a person to affirm there can be no recovery for the Israelites, Paul’s kinsmen according to the flesh? Where did such a notion originate? What is the source of a doctrine that is a glaring contradiction of both Divine reasoning and revelation? How is it that any person would speak of the Israelites

We have before us a rather lengthy passage that builds a case for the recovery of Israel. It does not set before us mere possibilities, but a Divine purpose. All of this is presented within the context of the Gospel of Christ, justification by faith, reconciliation to God, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit to believers.

as a former people, yet would allow for the continuance of the Gentiles?

Why Am I Saying This?

It may appear as though I am expressing a pet peeve or riding a theological hobby horse. But that is not the case at all. We have before us a rather lengthy passage that builds a case for the recovery of Israel. It does not set before us mere possibilities, but a Divine purpose. All of this is presented within the context of the Gospel of Christ, justification by faith, reconciliation to God, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit to believers. It was introduced by a refreshing reminder that God foreknows, predestinates, calls, justifies, glorifies, and makes everything work together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (8:28-30). We were reminded of the Divine choices of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We were even given an explanation for the rise of wicked Pharaoh (9:9-17). An evident direction in reason is established.

It is not possible to have a more lofty context. It is all tied together with the Persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – all of whom are depicted as intensely active. We cannot blot these things from our mind when we view this text, for it has been placed in the golden socket of those realities.

STUMBLING DOES NOT MEAN MADE EXTINCT

“I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall?” Other versions read, *“Have they stumbled that they should fall?”*^{KJV} *“... they did not stumble so as to fall, did they?”*^{NASB} *“Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery?”*^{NIV} *“Have they stumbled in order that they might fall?”*^{DARBY} *“Was this stumbling to lead to their final downfall?”*^{NJB}

Let it be clear, this is not a call for human speculation.

The Holy Spirit is not inviting the theologians and philosophers to provide their thoughts on the subject of Israel. Neither, indeed, are we remotely interested in human speculations on this subject. Let us rather hear what the Lord declares, throwing in the theological garbage can any human contradictions.

God has already told us Israel has stumbled: *“they stumbled at that stumbling stone”* (9:32). The question now posed is whether or not this is a permanent condition. Is Israel beyond recovery? Have they plummeted deeper than grace can reach? Have they moved beyond the perimeter of Promise? Will they ever be able to get up again?

Remember, the Spirit is speaking of the nation, not of individuals. He has already declared there has always been individuals among the nation who were accepted by God. They are the remnant, and there is still a remnant among the nation, even though the Israelites as a whole are blind and their back bowed. **However, the presence of the remnant proves the people as a whole still are recognized by God.**

Certain men will tell us that Israel

has, in fact, fallen beyond recovery. They are no more a people, and their place has been filled by another – on a permanent basis. We will now put such affirmations to the test.

The Answer

“Certainly not!” Other versions read, *“God forbid,”*^{NASB} *“May it never be!”*^{KJV} *“Not at all,”*^{NIV} *“By no means,”*^{NRSV} *“Far be the thought.”*^{DOUAY} *“In no way,”*^{BBE} *“Let it not be!”*^{YLT} *“Of course not!”*^{NLT} **“Out of the question!”**^{NJB} **Faith makes no provision for the conclusion that Israel has fallen beyond recovery!** For those who have been justified by faith, God has not allowed place for the thought that Israel is no longer a people, or that there is no hope for their salvation. For that matter, the heavens will not support such a conclusion from any of the sons of men, be they reconciled to God or not.

When such a thought comes, cast it down with your spiritual weaponry, for it is nothing but an imagination – a thought that is exalting itself against the knowledge of God (2 Cor 10:4-5). If that appears to be too strong, keep in mind that the expression *“God forbid!”* or *“Certainly not!”* is infinitely stronger than my weak words.

The meaning of the statement before us is this:

Israel’s stumbling does not mean they are beyond recovery. It does not mean the promises made to them have been voided, or that they cannot be saved.

SALVATION TO THE GENTILES THROUGH THEIR FALL

“But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.” Other versions read as follows. *“But rather, through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles,”*^{KJV} *“But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles.”*^{NASB} *“Because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles.”*^{NIV} *“But through their stumbling salvation has come to the Gentiles.”*^{NRSV} *“His purpose was to make His salvation available to the Gentiles.”*^{NJB}

This is the language of Divine

purpose. It is not the announcement of an alternative plan, or the reaction of God to Israel’s unexpected rejection of Christ. Here is an example where God has caused something remarkably good to happen out of something noticeably bad.

Gentile Acceptance

Salvation coming to the Gentiles is not generally appreciated among professed believers. It is too often taken for granted, as though it was only a small thing. This is not, however, the way those who are spiritually minded think.

It is true that the acceptance of the Gentiles was foretold by the holy prophets.

Israel’s stumbling does not mean they are beyond recovery. It does not mean the promises made to them have been voided, or that they cannot be saved.

- ❑ The uttermost part of the earth to be given to the Messiah (Psa 2:8).
- ❑ All the ends of the world will turn to the Lord, and all families of the nations worship before Him (Psa 22:27-31).
- ❑ All nations would flow into the Lord’s house (Isa 2:2-5).
- ❑ The Messiah would bring justice to the Gentiles (Isa 42:1).
- ❑ The Messiah would be a light to the Gentiles (Isa 42:6).
- ❑ The Gentiles would come to the light given to Israel (Isa 60:3).
- ❑ The forces of the Gentiles would come to the Lord (Isa 60:5,11).
- ❑ God’s glory would be declared to the Gentiles (Isa 66:19).
- ❑ The Gentiles would come to the Lord from the ends of the earth (Jer 16:19).

- ❑ God’s name would be great among the Gentiles (Mal 1:11).

The glory of these promises was generally unrecognized among the Jews. Even when they were delivered by the Prophets, there was a sort of vagueness about them that tended to make them obscure to those without faith.

Jesus alluded to the coming acceptance of the Gentiles. *“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd”* (John 10:16). When the day of Pentecost was fully come, Peter referred to the Gentiles. *“For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call”* (Acts 2:39). Still, the matter was not seen with any degree of clarity.

Part of this was owing to the Lord’s words to His disciples, and others. When He first sent out the twelve He said, *“Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”* (Matt 10:5-6). To a certain Gentile *“woman of Canaan”* who sought His help He said, *“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel,”* referring to the Gentiles as *“dogs”* (Matt 15:24-26). These things appeared to further lead the disciples to look with disdain upon the Gentiles.

It was not until 10-12 years after the day of Pentecost that the first Gentiles were brought to salvation (Acts 10). At that time, the Lord wrought a special sign to Peter, showing him that the Gentiles would be received (Acts 10:9-48). Even then, the Gentile to whom Peter was sent (Cornelius) was commended to Peter in these words: *“Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews”* (Acts 10:22). That event was accounted as a most remarkable working of the Lord. When the event was reported to the early leaders of the church, they responded, *“Then hath God also to the*

Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). Later, when the church of Antioch gathered together to hear of the conversion of the Gentiles, Paul and Barnabas *"rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles"* (Acts 14:27). A significant event, indeed!

The Lord did not reveal by the prophets the means through which the Gentiles would be brought to Him. It remained for the Apostles, particularly Paul, to make that means known. Our text declares it in these words: *"by their [the Jews] transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles."*^{NASB}

It would be presumptuous, indeed, for the Gentiles to boast about finding the Lord, even treating the Jews as though they had been rejected. After all, the Gentiles were the rejected people all along. Salvation came to them only because the Jews had stumbled over the Stumbling Stone. Even then, the Gospel was first presented to the Jews, and that

for several years.

It was in Antioch of Pisida that Paul and Barnabas *"waxed bold"* before a group of antagonistic Jews. *"It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles"* (Acts 13:46). That is a most vivid portrayal of the truth of this text.

THE REASON FOR GENTILES BEING SAVED

"To provoke them to jealousy." Other versions read *"to make them jealous,"*^{NASB} *"to make Israel envious,"*^{NIV} *"to make Israel jealous,"*^{NRSV} *"that they may be emulous of them."*^{DOUAY} *"so that they might be moved to envy."*^{BBE} *"to arouse them to jealousy,"*^{VLT} *"and then the Jews would be jealous and want it for themselves."*^{NLT} and *"in order to stir them to envy."*^{NJB}

The Holy Spirit is making a significant point: namely, that the Jews have not

fallen so as never to be recovered. Thus He tells us why salvation was brought to the Gentiles. It is most humiliating to Gentile flesh, but it does need to be declared. The salvation of the Gentiles was not the real point. Rather, it was to make the Jews envious, so they would more earnestly desire the salvation of God!

This provocation was announced by Moses before he died, and before Israel entered the promised land. *"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"* (Deut 32:21).

The idea behind the word *"jealousy"* is not related to anger or foolish conduct. Rather, it means to arouse to imitation, or to provoke them to seek the salvation that was offered to them, yet experienced by the Gentiles. Who but the Living God could entertain and implement such a lofty purpose!

RICHES THROUGH THEIR FALL

"¹² Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!" I am deeply impressed with the zealotry of the Holy Spirit in addressing this matter. It is as though the very heart of God is being opened to us, showing us Divine intentions that had not been clearly seen for centuries. Even to this very day, the things of which the Spirit is speaking are largely unknown within the professed church. We are being exposed to the wise and effective workings of the Lord – His *"wonderful works."* If you question whether or not God can bring good out of the evil things that are all about us, consider what glorious things have been produced by the fall of Israel – a fall that is not beyond recovery.

RICHES FOR THE WORLD

Remember, it is God who induced the fall of the Jews by placing a stumbling block before them, and making their table a snare and a trap. It is also God who has caused true riches to be *"for the world"*

and *"for the Gentiles."* In this, God is working out His purpose.

The point that will now be made is that the salvation of the Gentiles does not depend upon the fall of the Jews. It is not that only one group can be saved: either Jews or Gentiles. The Spirit will show us that both Jews and Gentiles are to be saved.

The *"riches"* refer to the bounty of salvation. Jesus referred to these as the *"true riches"* (Lk 16:11), that is, riches that transfer into the world to come. These include the *"riches of His goodness"* (Rom 2:4), the *"riches of His glory"* (Rom 9:23), and *"the riches of His grace"* (Eph 1:7). There are the *"unsearchable riches of Christ"* (Eph 3:6), the *"riches of the full assurance of understanding"* (Col 2:2), and the richness of both mercy and faith (Eph 2:4; James 2:5).

When Israel fell, the treasures of salvation were opened to the Gentiles. The rich promises made to Israel became

available to them, including the circumcision of the heart (Deut 30:6), the writing of God's laws upon the heart and mind (Jer 31:33), and the remembering of their sins no more (Jer 31:34). A new heart and a new spirit was offered to them (Ezek 36:26). They would all be taught by God (Isa 2:3), and with joy would draw water from the wells of salvation (Isa 12:3). Riches indeed!

THEIR FULLNESS

The Spirit rises even higher, bringing the believer into lofty realms upon the wings of faith. If Israel falling and losing the blessing brought salvation to the Gentiles, *"how much more their fullness"* will bring? Other versions read, *"how much more will their fulfillment be!"*^{NASB}

A source of richness

"How much greater riches will their fullness bring!"^{NIV} *"How much more will their full inclusion mean!"*^{NRSV} *"How much greater will be the glory when they are made full?"*^{BBE} *"Think how much*

greater a blessing the world will share when the Jews finally accept it."^{NLT} "How much greater a gain will come when all is restored to them!"^{NJB}

"Their fulness" refers to a period of time when they will not be noted for having a "remnant" among a mass of unbelievers. When they are made full, the majority of them will turn to the Lord, not the minority as now.

The prophets spoke of such a marvelous time. "And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto Me with their whole heart" (Jer

24:7). ". . . and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid" (Jer 30:10). "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them" (Jer 32:39).

Because this matter is going to be developed extensively in this passage, there is no need to here deal with the many prophecies relating to Israel's "fulness," or restoration to favor.

The Point

The wonderful point is that if the cutting off of all but a remnant brought Divine riches to the world, what will the

inclusion, or re-grafting, of them bring! If God can bring riches from a curse, what will He bring from a blessing!

A Significant Point

Because of the antagonism of many toward this subject, it is necessary to say something more about it. **Sound reason cannot be established upon absurdity!** If Israel has been totally rejected, and has fallen beyond recovery, the Spirit would not speak in this manner.

It would be an insult to the Lord and a reproach to the very idea of inspiration to speak of the "fulness" of Israel if such a thing was not possible. This should be very evident.

THE MINISTRY OF PAUL

"¹³ For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, ¹⁴ if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and

God (John 8:28,38; 12:49).

It is fashionable in a generally free society to mention freedom of speech, and to create an arena in which a free

"I am speaking to you who are Gentiles."

^{NASB} While this word is intended for all believers, and, like "all Scripture," is "profitable," it is particularly addressed to the Gentiles. That means this is something Gentile believers need to know. It is something that God raised up a special messenger to declare. It is not something to be withheld from "the Gentiles," and that is why it is spoken.

Rather than offering fleshly explanations for Israel, its condition, and its future Paul has woven the revelations given to him with the words of Moses and the Prophets. This is a message Gentiles need to hear, and all of the Word of God strongly supports that fact.

If you have been a Christian for any length of time, you know full well that there are untold multitudes of churches that have never been told these things. Some have even heard such things denied with enthusiasm, and those who declare them derided and maligned. If the saints are scheduled to "judge the world" (1 Cor 6:2), it seems fitting to me that the Apostle to the Gentiles would have a role in judging those pretentious preachers and teachers who have contradicted what he has so strongly affirmed in this passage.

save some of them." Paul is very deliberate in unfolding this rather sensitive and far-reaching subject. He is addressing this discourse to the Gentiles, and doing so with an acute awareness of the stewardship that had been assigned to him. He is not simply sharing his heart, although that is involved. Jesus did not call Paul into the apostleship because of any particular expertise he had. Neither, indeed, was He providing Paul with a forum in which he could put forth his personal convictions. That has never been the agenda through which the Lord of glory operates, and it is not now. Like Jesus Himself, **the servant of God is only licensed to speak the words of**

exchange of thought can take place. While there be some measure of nobility in such efforts, they have nothing whatsoever to do with Christ's administration of the will of God. The "government" has been placed exclusively upon His shoulder (Isa 9:6-7), and He is executing His rule with strict regard for the purpose of God. The will of man does not drive this Divine government, or enter into the agenda by which it is governed.

I SPEAK TO YOU GENTILES

"For I speak to you Gentiles." Paul is not simply addressing a crowd. He is focusing in his remarks, saying things that are intended for the ears of Gentiles.

Rather than offering fleshly explanations for Israel, its condition, and its future Paul has woven the revelations given to him with the words of Moses and the Prophets. This is a message Gentiles need to hear, and all of the Word of God strongly supports that fact.

I AM AN APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES

Although Paul's Apostleship was not limited to the Gentiles, it was primarily to them. When directing Ananias to go to penitent Saul of Tarsus, Jesus said, *"Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel"* (Acts 9:15). When the Holy Spirit began to use Paul in the ministry, He instructed the early church, *"Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them"* (Acts 13:2). Paul wrote to the Galatians, *"when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood"* (Gal 1:15-16).

God revealed His hidden purpose to Paul – a purpose that had not been so revealed before (Eph 3:3-5). He was endowed with *"the gift of grace"* and the *"effectual working"* of His mighty power (Eph 3:7). He was to *"preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery"* (Eph 3:8-9). Even heavenly *"principalities and powers"* would be shown the *"manifold wisdom of God"* as a result of his ministry (Eph 3:10).

The point to see here is that the words of our text are associated with that purpose. They are intended for the church, and are not to be despised. They relate to God's *"eternal purpose"* (Eph 3:11) and are of interest to angelic hosts.

How ministers of the Word can learn from Paul's example! Too often they are driven by the agendas of men, or even by personal preferences. No laborer in the vineyard of the Lord is allowed such liberty. If men are unwilling to preach what God wants said, they should immediately withdraw from the ministry.

MAGNIFYING HIS MINISTRY

"I magnify my ministry." Other versions read, *"I magnify mine office,"*^{KJV} *"I make much of my ministry,"*^{NIV} *"I glorify my ministry,"*^{NRSV} *"I honor my*

ministry,"^{DOUAY} and *"I lay great stress on this [ministry]."*^{NLT} He ministered with an overwhelming sense of the One who had called and commissioned him. That is what drove him to say these words. Woe be to the person who tampers with them as though they were optional, or an opinion of Paul, or some inconsequential word. **These are not sayings to be conveniently adapted to favored**

those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation" (Deut 32:21). The Lord would not do this, however, independently of means. He would not mysteriously move upon the people, or show them a vision of what was coming. Instead, He would move them to jealousy through the preaching of one of their own who was born again.

I do not question that God still uses means like this, provoking those who are confident they have a monopoly on the truth by unveiling great truths to, and marvelously changing, those whom they despise. We should seek grace to be alert to this Divine manner.

Those Who are of My Flesh

Some sophist might suppose Paul is speaking of awakening spiritual Jews. In order to dispel such a notion, the Apostle is very precise concerning whom he seeks to challenge. *"Those who are my flesh"* refers to all whose fleshly lineage could be traced back to Abraham. They were, as Paul earlier affirmed, his *"kinsmen according to the flesh"* (9:3).

Paul's Apostleship to the Gentiles was Divinely intended to awaken the Jews Godward. For those inclined to believe the Jews have been totally repudiated, this fact alone should dispel such inclinations. No person or group of persons who have been consigned to an irremediable state can be the target of awakening or of salvation.

Might Save Some of Them

We must not allow ourselves to equate *"some"* with the word *"few."* Already, the Lord has shown us that *"some"* can well refer to the majority, and to vast numbers (Rom 3:3; 1 Cor 10:7,8,9,10). Here, the word *"some"* does equate with *"a remnant according to the election of grace"* (11:6). It is a view that takes the entirety of the nation into account, not just a specific generation. Again, if Israel had been totally ejected, as was Sodom and Gomorrah, none of them could have been saved. Therefore, the very inspired intention of Paul confirms Israel has not been finally consigned to reprobacy.

As an Apostle, Paul is not at all like a President of the United States, or the King or Queen of England. In his ministry Paul did not magnify his person, but his "ministry" – "an Apostle to the Gentiles." He does not speak for the people, or a movement, but for God.

theological views, or positions that distinguish one believer from another.

As an Apostle, Paul is not at all like a President of the United States, or the King or Queen of England. In his ministry Paul did not magnify his person, but his *"ministry"* – *"an Apostle to the Gentiles."* He does not speak for the people, or a movement, but for God. In speaking as an Apostle, Paul brings glory to the One who placed him in that office.

PROVOKING TO JEALOUSY

"... if by any means I may provoke to jealousy..." Other versions read, *"If by any means I may provoke to emulation,"*^{KJV} and *"in the hope that I may somehow arouse."*^{NIV}

There is a marvelous strategy – preaching to one people to have a calculated effect upon another people! This was not a self-conceived strategy, but a revealed one. Around 1,500 years before Paul was called to the Apostleship, God revealed through Moses what He intended to do. *"I will move them to jealousy with*

Might Save

It is of more than passing interest that Paul refers to himself as saving “some of them.” This is a difficult saying for many, but there is no need for it to be. Frequently the Word of God refers to believers saving people.

- ❑ “For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt **save thy husband**?” (1 Cor 7:16a).
- ❑ “. . . or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt **save thy wife**?” (1 Cor 7:16b).

- ❑ “To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means **save some**” (1 Cor 9:22).
- ❑ “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, **and them that hear thee**” (1 Tim 4:16).
- ❑ “Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall **save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins**” (James 5:20).

- ❑ “And **others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh**” (Jude 23).

It is quite true that there is “One . . . who is able to save” (James 4:12). Yet, in Christ Jesus, the saved join together with God in that holy work. They not only participate in the Divine nature (2 Pet 1:4), but in the Divine work. Thus, they become “laborers together with God” in a most remarkable and refreshing way (1 Cor 3:9). God works in us, “both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil 2:13).

RECONCILIATION THROUGH CASTING AWAY

“¹⁵ For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” Once again, the Spirit will reason with us concerning the glory of Israel’s restoration to the Lord. If their rejection of Christ brought a blessing to the world, what will their acceptance of Him bring? Of course, this type of reasoning is purposeless if there is no possibility of them being restored. If Israel is beyond recovery, it is utter foolishness to speak in this manner. In such a case, this would be mere fleshly wishfulness.

CAST AWAY

“For if their being cast away . . . ” Other versions read, “If their rejection,” NASB “If their loss,” DOUAY and “If their putting away.” BBE

The rejection of the Jews is to be considered within the context of Christ Jesus and the Gospel. It was not until they “received not” (John 1:11) their own Savior that this rejection took place.

This is the rejection of which Hosea prophesied: “Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God” (Hos 1:9). The name “Lo-Ammi” means “not my people.”

This is now the seventh description of Israel’s judgment.

- ❑ They stumbled at the Stumbling stone (9:32).

- ❑ God gave them the spirit of slumber (11:8-9).
- ❑ Their table was made a snare and a stumbling block (11:9).
- ❑ Their eyes were darkened so they could not see (11:10).
- ❑ They fell (11:12a).
- ❑ They were diminished, or failed (11:12b).
- ❑ They were cast away (11:15).

Thus the Gospel, together with its advantages, was taken from among them. Although they were the exclusive custodians of the promises of salvation, now a believer among them would be the exception, not the rule. As a nation, they lost their advantages, and only a remnant among them now finds grace in the eyes of the Lord.

Being “cast away,” a veil is now upon their hearts when they read their own Scriptures (2 Cor 3:14; Acts 13:27). They are unable to make an association between Jesus of Nazareth and the very Scriptures that were given to prepare them to receive Him.

This veil will only be lifted when they turn to the Lord. “Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away” (2 Cor 3:16). Or, as Jesus said, “Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matt 23:39). No amount of academic discipline can bring an end to being “cast away.” Only turning to the Lord will accomplish that.

RECONCILING OF THE WORLD

“. . . is the reconciling of the world.” When the Jews were “cast away,” the great salvation of God was not abandoned. From that awful judgment came the reconciliation of the world!

The meaning of this passage is that ONLY after Israel rejected the “word of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:19) was it preached to the rest of the world. For 1,500 years, messages from God had been confined to the Jewish world. But now, when, as a whole, they thrust the word of the Gospel from them, the “door of faith” was glorious opened to the Gentiles (Acts 14:27). Paul and Barnabas stated it well in Antioch of Pisidia. “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth’” (Acts 13:46-47). This is the precise truth expressed in the words of our text.

Now the Spirit will rise on the wings of Divine reason, confirming not only the possibility of Israel’s conversion, but what will occur when it takes place.

THEIR ACCEPTANCE

“. . . what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” The KJV reads, “the receiving of them.” This refers to God’s acceptance, or receiving, of them in Christ Jesus. Note with care, the text does not

suggest the mere possibility of Israel being received or accepted. Rather it speaks of it as a reality – something that is going to take place. Various versions refer to “*their acceptance*” in this way. “*The receiving of them,*”^{ASV} “*their reception,*”^{DARBY} “*their coming back again,*”^{BBE} “*the reception,*”^{VLT} “*their re-acceptance.*”^{NJB} There is not the slightest hint of ambiguity in those words – no suggestion that they cannot or will not be received. In fact, the Spirit bases His reasoning upon their return, something that would be absurd to the extreme if it was not possible.

Keep in mind, “*their acceptance*” is the same occasion as “*their fulness*” in the

previous verse. From the standpoint of Israel it is “*their fulness.*” From the Divine view, it is “*their acceptance.*”

The Reasoning

If such remarkable benefits resulted from Israel’s rejection, what advantages will come when they are accepted? This is in keeping with the very nature of the Kingdom of God, which is to increase, expand, and become greater. It is said of the Lord Jesus, “*Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end*” (Isa 9:7). If that Kingdom expanded when Israel was rejected, what will happen when they are received?

LIFE FROM THE DEAD

“*. . . but life from the dead.*” Every major translation reads precisely the same way: “*life from the dead.*” The language is that of resurrection – living people coming from the region of the dead!

The meaning of the text is that a great spiritual resurrection will occur. This will not only be among the Israelites, but throughout the nations of the world. The great blessing came to the rest of the world when Israel was cast away, what magnitude of blessing will take place when they are again accepted. It will be like Ezekiel’s valley of dry bones (Ezek 37) and his vision of the waters (Ezek 47). There will be a global impact – it will be “*life from the dead!*”

THE FIRSTFRUIT AND THE LUMP

“*16 For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.*” Here are two different symbols. The first is to a batch of dough, and the second to a tree. Other versions read, “*And if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too,*”^{NASB} “*If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches,*”^{NIV} and “*If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.*”^{NIB} The New Living Translation offers an interpretation of the text that is based upon the context. “*And since Abraham and the other patriarchs were holy, their children will also be holy. For if the roots of the tree are holy, the branches will be, too.*”

THE PRINCIPLE OF FIRST FRUITS

The principle of “*first fruits*” was instituted under the Law (Ex 23:16,19; 34:22,26; Lev 2:12; 23:10,17,20; Num 18:26; Deut 26:10). The “*first*” of everything belonged to God, from mankind to the grains of the field.

The specific reference of this text is to the fifteen chapter of Numbers. Here the Lord gave procedures to be followed after the people entered into Canaan. Included in those procedures was the offering of the

first fruits of the harvest of the land. It was something to be followed in all of their generations. “*Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the LORD an heave offering in your generations*” (Num 15:21).

The idea Divinely developed was that the offering of the first fruits sanctified the remainder, rendering it holy, acceptable to and blessed by God. This principle finds its highest fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is called, “*the first fruits of them that slept.*” and “*Christ the first fruits*” (2 Cor 15:23). By virtue of that role, He sanctifies and makes acceptable all who are in Him.

THE FIRSTFRUIT AND THE ROOT

The “*firstfruit*” is taken from the Law, “*the root*” is taken from nature. Both of them stand for the whole. What is said of “*the firstfruit*” and the “*root,*” is also true of the “*lump*” and “*the branches.*” That is the point of the statement. Admittedly, the flesh will object to this form of reasoning, because it does not fit into the theological molds created by men. Yet, these are the words of the Spirit, and no person is wise or strong enough to resist them without impunity. This is “*the mind of the Spirit*” (Rom 8:27), and words “*which the Holy Spirit teaches*” (1 Cor 2:13).

Both the “*first fruit*” and the “*root,*” in this case, is Abraham specifically, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, generally. There is no question about them being “*holy,*” chosen and accepted by God– a point that has already been made (4:1-9,16; 9:7-10,13). They are the “*first fruit*” in the sense of being first of a special people who were accepted by God. They are the “*root*” in the sense of being progenitors, or forefathers, of the Israelites.

THE LUMP AND THE BRANCHES

“*Lump*” and “*branches*” are terms denoting the people coming from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – Paul’s “*kinsmen according to the flesh*” (9:3), or “*Israelites*” (9:4).

It is important to remember that “*lump*” and “*branches*” do not refer to individuals, but to the nation. The point being developed is that the nation of Israel has not been totally rejected. They have been, so to speak, sanctified by the “*firstfruit*” and “*root*” of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Later in this passage the Spirit will clearly affirm, “*they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes*” (11:26). We are not dealing with a theological novelty, but with an aspect of God’s eternal purpose.

“*Holy,*” in this case, does not mean

that all of the Israelites have partaken of the righteousness of God. It does not mean they are personally devout and filled with faith. Nor, indeed, does it mean that God has reckoned righteousness to them, thereby making them "holy."

Here, "holy" means the nation is not completely cast away, for the sake of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom the promises were made. The situation is similar to an unbelieving spouse being sanctified by the believer: i.e., "For the

unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy" (1 Cor 7:14). "Holy" is also used in same sense as the children of such a divided home being "holy" because of the believer. This does not mean that the children are, by virtue of the believing spouse, personally pure and righteous before the Lord. **Here the idea is that of legitimacy, not moral or spiritual purity.** Even though one spouse is a believer and one an unbeliever,

yet the marriage is legitimate, and the children resulting from it are legitimate, or not "bastards" (Deut 23:2).

The Point

The point is that God still recognizes the nation of Israel because of the fathers. The promises are still in place, and they are not without hope. These comments will suffice at this point. This very subject will be further developed in verses 28-31. It is essential, however, that we bring our minds into accord with this revelation.

ONLY SOME WERE BROKEN OFF

"17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree . . ."

Now the Spirit further elaborates on the reality of the situation, thereby liberating us from any tendency to speculate. Having affirmed that the nation still stands accepted before God because of the fathers, the Spirit now deals with the fact of unbelief, that still is dominant among them. He will show that the present condition of Israel is not a permanent state. Some of the people have been thrust aside, but not all of them.

SOME OF THE BRANCHES

If it is true that the Israelites as a whole have not been totally rejected, it ought to be clear that only "some" of them were removed, or "broken off." However, the Spirit does not simply leave it to the reader to draw that conclusion, even though it should be perfectly clear to the uncluttered heart. This point is too important for it to depend upon the conclusions of men.

There are at least two things being accomplished in this teaching.

First, the Gentiles are being humbled, so they will not imagine themselves to be better than the Jews, either individually or collectively. If The Gentiles are compared with the Jews as a

whole, there is no comparison. The Jews outshine them in every respect, being a special people chosen unto the Lord.

Second, the Jews are offered hope, lest they be tempted to believe they are beyond recovery. They remain scattered and do not have their ancient glory. This could lead them to conclude what was revealed to the prophet Ezekiel. "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts" (Ezek 37:11).

15:2,6).

The Psalmist portrayed the nation of Israel as "a vine brought out of Egypt." The Lord "cast out the heathen," and "planted" it. It "made room" for it, causing it to "take deep root" and "fill the land." Yet, that very vine was eventually pillaged by the heathen, "burned with fire," and even "cut down." Still, the Psalmist prayed that God would "look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch

Having affirmed that the nation still stands accepted before God because of the fathers, the Spirit now deals with the fact of unbelief, that still is dominant among them. He will show that the present condition of Israel is not a permanent state.

You will recall that God revealed through Ezekiel that He would put His Spirit into Israel, causing them to live and to again come into their land (37:12-14). Our text is showing the redemptive side of that promise.

Some of the Branches Broken Off
"And if some of the branches were broken off . . ." This kind of reasoning should not take us by surprise. Jesus said the same thing takes place among those identified with Him (John

that thou madest strong for thyself" (Psa 11:5-16). He knew, and we ought to know it better, that only "some of the branches were broken off!"

"Some" does not mean "few." To this point, "some" constitutes the majority, like the "some" who did not believe among the Israelites who were delivered from Egypt (Rom 3:3). Those people were like branches that "withered," and were thus "broken off" (Isa 27:11). The reason for stating it in this manner is to assure

our hearts that the tree was not plucked up by the roots. The roots remain, as well as the tree. It is only “*some of the branches*” – original branches – that have been cut off.

A WILD OLIVE TREE

“ . . . *and you, being a wild olive tree . . .* ” This is the Divine view of the Gentiles: “*a wild olive tree.*” It speaks of a people who grew up without Divine attendance. No special attention was paid to the Gentile world. From this point of view, the nations experienced no favorable Divine intervention. While they remained under the government of God, and were often used by Him for sundry intentions

of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph 2:12b), and dead in “*sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh*” (Col 2:13). What a contrast with the Jews, “*to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever*” (Rom 9:4-5)!

GRAFTED IN AMONG THEM

And how is it that the Gentiles receive a blessing? Are they granted to have their own tree, so to speak? Does God replace the Israelites with them? Indeed not.

FATNESS

“ . . . *and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree.*” Other versions read, “*now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root,*”^{NIV} “*sharing in God’s rich nourishment of his special olive tree,*”^{NLT} and “*and were given a part with them in the root by which the olive-tree is made fertile.*”^{BBE}

It is “*the blessing of Abraham*” that has “*come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*” (Gal 3:14). The glorious Gospel we have received was first “*preached unto Abraham*” (Gal 3:8).

The splendid covenant in which we have found acceptance is the one that was made “*with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah*” (Heb 8:8).

The “*root and fatness*” is the blessedness of identity with God, and it is traced back to Abraham. Jesus, after all is the true promised “*Seed*” of Abraham. As it is written, “*Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is Christ*” (Gal 3:16).

In a sense, we have only **taken the place** of those who were “*broken off.*” Some versions convey this idea in their rendering of this verse. We were “*were grafted in their place to share the rich root of the olive tree,*”^{NRSV} and “*were grafted in their place and have come to share in the rich root of the olive tree.*”^{NAB} This thought will be more fully developed in the eighteenth verse.

Israel cannot, then, be totally rejected, for we that are in Christ Jesus have been taken from a wild olive tree and grafted in among them. What we are enjoying was committed to them, and belongs to them. That is still the case, and we are still “*among them.*”

God did not create a new thing for the Gentiles. The promises made to Abraham were not abandoned, nor was the Abrahamic tree that He planted uprooted. We have been added to them, placed among those faithful offspring of Abraham who were received and made righteous by God.

related to His “*eternal purpose,*” they were “*wild,*” developing outside of the circumference of Divine care.

Other versions read, “*a wild olive shoot.*” From the standpoint of language, this means a sprout, or shoot, from an uncultivated olive tree. Unlike the Jews, the Gentiles had no special revelation from God – no Divine cultivation. No prophets were given to them, no righteous judges, and no godly kings. No covenant was given to them or promised to them. They were a “*wild olive tree.*”

As a “*wild olive tree,*” the Gentiles were “*afar off*” (Acts 2:39), “*sinners of the Gentiles*” (Gal 2:15), and “*aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*” (Eph 2:12a). They were “*strangers from the covenants*

Instead, in Christ, the Gentiles are grafted into the Jewish tree – the cultivated olive tree. The Gentiles were “*were grafted in among them.*”

The “*them,*” in this case, is the “*remnant*” in particular, and the Israelites in general. The point is that we find acceptance “*among them,*” and not vice versa.

God did not create a new thing for the Gentiles. The promises made to Abraham were not abandoned, nor was the Abrahamic tree uprooted. We have been added to them, placed among those faithful offspring of Abraham who were received and made righteous by God.

PARTAKER OF THE ROOT AND

DO NOT BOAST! DO NOT BOAST!

“¹⁸ . . . *do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support*

the root, but the root supports you.” In a sense, those who declare Israel has been altogether cut off are boasting. They

imagine that the Divine attention has now been turned to them, and away from Israel. The Spirit now corrects that

perverse way of thinking, showing that frame of mind to be seriously flawed.

BOASTING AGAINST THE BRANCHES

“ . . . do not boast against the branches!” Other versions read, “do not be arrogant toward the branches,”^{NASB} “do not boast over those branches,”^{NIV} “Do not be uplifted in pride over the branches,”^{BBE} “But you must be careful not to brag about being grafted in to replace the branches that were broken off,”^{NLT} and “then it is not for you to consider yourself superior to the other branches.”^{NJB}

False approaches to religion tend to breed arrogance. Thus, Jesus told of a Pharisee who stood and prayed with himself, “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men” (Lk 18:11). His religion made him pray in this manner. Earlier in Romans, our attention was drawn to those took confidence in being a Jew. “Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God” (Rom 2:17).

The religious world has always had to contend with those who boasted they were

better than others. Such boasting, however, is brought to its most foolish and harmful level when Gentile Christians, as a group, consider themselves better than the Israelites **who were broken off**, or the ones who remain, with whom we have been made one in Christ (Eph 2:15). Rather than boast over them, we Gentiles should lament that any branches were broken off of their tree, and pray that they may be restored to Divine favor.

REMEMBER! REMEMBER!

“But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.” Other versions read, “You do not support the root, but the root supports you,”^{NIV} “It is not you that sustain the root, but the root that sustains you,”^{NJB} and “Remember, you are just a branch, not the root.”^{NLT}

There are some important things to remember about our situation as Gentiles.

- ❑ The Jews were the first to be the people of God.
- ❑ All of the Prophets and Apostles were Jews.
- ❑ The Lord Jesus Himself came from their stock.
- ❑ The first who were inducted into

Christ were from Israel.

- ❑ The Gospel is God’s power unto salvation to “the Jew first” (Rom 1:16).
- ❑ Glory, honor, and peace are promised to every person who does good, “to the Jew first” (Rom 2:10).
- ❑ The Old Testament books, thirty-nine in number, were all written by Jews, and faithfully kept by them for our edification.
- ❑ Of the twenty-seven New Testament books, only two were written by a Gentile. Luke, who is understood to be a Greek, wrote the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. The rest of the books were written by Jews.

The truth of the matter is that **the Jews have received no advantages from the Gentiles whatsoever.** It has all been the other way around – the Gentiles have profited from them: from their Law, their Prophets, their promises, their covenant, And their Messiah.

From the standpoint of lineage, It is through Abraham that the whole world is being blessed! Indeed, the root is bearing us, and not we the root! If you trace Gentile origins, they are not good.

THINK AGAIN!

“¹⁹ You will say then, ‘Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.’²⁰ Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.”

Do not miss how tenacious the Holy Spirit is on this subject. He refuses to let it go, leaving conclusions in the hands of men. Whatever you may think of human reasoning and logic, it is not sufficient to come to the right conclusions and implications of things revealed.

YOU WILL SAY

“You will say then, ‘Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.’” From this view, the removal of “some” of the branches was a means of making room

for we Gentiles. The clear implication is that if “some of the branches” were not “broken off,” there would have been no room for we Gentiles.

However, this is not intended to be an insightful response, but one of Gentile arrogance. The supposition is that such a high value was placed upon the Gentiles, that place was made for them by removing some of the natural branches. Too, the assumption is that the removal of some of the branches was due to their vileness and unworthiness. This, then, became a source of pride to unthinking Gentile believers.

WELL SAID

“Well said . . .” Other versions read, “Quite right,”^{NASB} “Granted,”^{NIV} “This is so,”^{NAB} “Truly,”^{BBE} and “That is true.”^{NRSV} Although the observation of verse nineteen was technically true, it was not

a thorough explanation of the situation, nor did it contribute to an excellent spirit among those espousing it. The Spirit will confirm the Gentiles had no merits that constituted them better than the Jews. Nor, indeed, were they to regard themselves as superior because they took the place of others.

BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF

“Because of unbelief they were broken off. . . .” While some element of truth was found in the observation that some Jewish branches were removed that the Gentiles might be grafted into their tree, this was not an appropriate way to think. It was not conducive to godliness, and diminished the value of the grace of God.

Thus we are reminded that the Jewish branches were broken off “because of unbelief,” not because of a cold and

calculating purpose. This truth is made abundantly clear in Scripture.

- ❑ *“Some did not believe” (Rom 3:3).*
- ❑ *“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46).*
- ❑ *“And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles” (Acts 18:6).*
- ❑ *“And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Heb 3:18-19).*
- ❑ *“Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief” (Heb 4:6).*
- ❑ *“Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief” (Heb 4:11).*

It is the way of God to never ignore or honor unbelief! We have the Jews as a premier example of this, and it is to be duly noted. Had the branches that were broken off not been unbelieving, they would not have been broken off, Gentiles or not!

YOU STAND BY FAITH

“ . . . you stand by faith.” Here is a facet of the truth that the Gentile church has not proclaimed with any degree of acceptability. There are vast numbers of professed believers who rarely entertain such a thought. *“You stand by faith!”* The idea is that our standing before God is in strict accordance with our faith. We are not accepted because we attend the right church, or hold to the right beliefs. There is certainly nothing wrong with those things, but they are not in the same category as faith. There is no salvation part from faith – present faith! There can be no experience of grace apart from faith,

for salvation is ever *“by grace through faith”* (Eph 2:8). There is no point in salvation where this word becomes obsolete, *“without faith it is impossible to please him”* (Heb 11:6).

Standing by faith is another way of saying, *“The just shall live by faith”* (Rom

We are living in a religious culture that actually makes it easy to become “haughty,” presumptuous, or arrogant. Finely tuned theologies and systems of religious thought are being perpetrated that do not require faith in God.

1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:39). Our safety is not in our position, but our faith! It is not in what we have done in the past, but in our faith!

FEAR, DO NOT BE HAUGHTY

“Do not be haughty, but fear.” And why is it that those who are aligned with Christ should shun haughtiness and embrace fear? For some, this is too hard. We are living in a religious culture that actually makes it easy to become “haughty,” presumptuous, or arrogant. Finely tuned theologies and systems of religious thought are being perpetrated that do not require faith in God. It is enough to embrace these views, and the people who do so are taught they are safe because of it. Some imagine if they have the right “church” name, call themselves by a technically correct term, and do things by the rules they think are in place, they can stand before God. But all of this is a total misrepresentation. There is not a spark of truth in it. Our ONLY confidence is in the Lord. That is something of what it means to *“stand by faith.”* It is to *“live by faith,”* shaping our entire lives by unseen things, exceeding great and precious promises, and the joyful expectation of our Lord’s return. It

is to be governed by unseen realities.

Honest people know these things are not common in the churches. But they are absolutely essential.

HE MAY NOT SPARE YOU

“For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.” This is a particularly relevant word to those who strenuously object to any thought of God again having mercy upon the Israelites, Paul’s *“kinsmen according to the flesh.”*

Who is the person in all of Christendom willing to affirm things are anything near ideal in the Gentile church? Where can a soul be found that will say that faith is a dominating trait in the churches? The plague of unbelief is streaming through the churches like a defiling watercourse. Some are caught in the stream unwillingly, and yet are overwhelmed by institutional propaganda.

Here the solemn warning of the Holy Spirit! *“For if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you either.”*^{NIV} By this the Spirit means God will not spare us if unbelief is found in us! **If God were tolerate an unbelieving Gentile church, He would have to apologize to the Jews who were cast off because of their unbelief!** He would, in such a case, be proved a respecter of persons.

There are some remarkable likenesses to unbelieving Israel that are found in the Gentile church. The irony of the situation is that these conditions are regularly acknowledged by preachers and teachers who say “we are just like Israel.”

Not going into the promised land. When Israel did not go into the promised land as directed, they were excluded from it (Num 20:24). There are also exceeding great and precious promises given to those in Christ Jesus. They involve going on to perfection (Heb 6:1-8), seeking the things that are above (Col 3:1-3), and pressing toward the mark (Phil 3:14-15). Solemnly we are told to

“Fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim 6:12). Do not imagine for a fleeting moment that these admonitions can be ignored and acceptance with God still be maintained. Some of Israel’s branches were cut off because of unbelief. Unbelief in the church will result in the same judgment! *“For if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you either.”*^{NIV}

Coveting the goods of Jericho.

When Israel entered the promised land, they were forbidden to take any of the *“cursed”* things for themselves (Josh 6:17-18). Achan, who had successfully passed through the wilderness and arrived in the promised land, chose to disobey that Divine injunction. He coveted and took a Babylonish garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold. As a result, he not only lost his own life, but the life of all of his family (Josh 7:24-26). God has equally warned those in Christ to take care not to become meshed with this present evil world (Col 3:3; 1 John 2:15-17; 1 Pet 2:11). Those who ignore those warnings will be judged just as surely as Achan was judged. *“For if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you either.”*^{NIV}

Despising the bread sent from heaven.

When Israel was led through the wilderness for forty years, God gave them *“bread from heaven”* (Ex 16:4; Neh 9:15; John 6:31). It was good food, and readily adapted for their journey through the wilderness. It was both adequate and consistent. Yet, Israel was discontent with the Divinely-given diet. They cried out, *“our soul loatheth this light bread”* (Num 21:6). As a result of their discontent, God sent venomous snakes among them, and *“much people of Israel died”* (Num 21:6). The Lord has also provided a good

spiritual diet for those who are in Christ Jesus. It consists of *“all things that pertain unto life and godliness”* (2 Pet 1:3). Those who refuse this diet for the inner man in preference of the wisdom of this world will not escape the judgment of the Lord. *“For if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you either.”*^{NIV}

Wanting a king like other

nations. There came a time when Israel rejected the leading of the Lord, choosing to emulate the heathen nations about them. They made a petition of one of the greatest of all judges, Samuel. *“Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations”* (1 Sam 8:5). While the saying greatly displeased Samuel, and the Lord as well, He instructed Samuel, *“Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them”* (1 Sam 8:7). Their choice took a heavy toll upon them. The new king would take their sons and daughters, and appoint them for himself, to serve his own interests. He would cause them *“to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants”* (1 Sam 8:12-18). Heavy taxes would be leveled against them, and they would have less than they had before. Likewise, there are those within the Gentile church who have preferred the educators, psychiatrists, organizers, etc., to the Lord Jesus Christ. They have chosen to be led by mere men rather than by God and those whom He has placed in the church.

Such choices will not go unnoticed by the Lord of glory. *“For if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you either.”*^{NIV}

Any representation of God and His love that has Him tolerant of unbelief, the failure to appropriate His promises, and sinful indulgence among His people, is nothing less than a boast against the branches. If we learn anything from Israel, it is surely that God will not ignore unbelief and indolence in His people.

SOBER REFLECTIONS

When the condition of the church is considered with the natural olive branches who were cut off in mind, it has a significant impact upon the heart and mind. God has not changed. He is no more tolerant of unbelief today than He was when Israel refused to enter the promised land. The Gospel has not mellowed God, so to speak. Rather, it has opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, allowing them to enter into favor with God *“by grace through faith.”*

Gentiles believers do well not to boast against the branches. They also do well to zealously avoid any doctrines that create comfort in a state of alienation. Some have taken upon themselves to construct doctrines that diminish the enormity of sin and unbelief. They speak of an *“unconditional love,”* the impossibility of being rejected once you are accepted, and God keeping people independently of their faith. Still others see no need for the love of the people of God, and seeking things above.

These are all views that boast against the branches, supposing that God will treat unbelief with favor and longsuffering. But that is not so.

GOODNESS AND SEVERITY CONSIDERED

“²² Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.” Rarely will you hear a challenge for Christians to consider these

things – *“the goodness AND severity of God.”* These are two facets of the Divine character. Neither of them will ever become obsolete. No covenant of God has voided either of them.

False religions present God as either

good or severe, but never as both. This reflects a marked tendency in men to distort the concept of God. This disposition even exists in the Christian community where people are often prone to forget or minimize one of these Divine characteristics. This can be readily seen in

the hackneyed expressions “modernist” and “legalist.” The “modernist,” as ordinarily understood, finds it difficult to consider “*the severity of God.*” The “legalist” has trouble beholding “*the goodness of God.*” However, if our thoughts are to be acceptable to God, we must learn to dwell upon both of these traits, pondering them in faith.

This text will show us that neither God’s “goodness” nor His “severity” are arbitrary, or disassociated from men’s response to Him. **While God’s primary motivation is His will, He cannot be moved by that will to be good toward those who choose to ignore that goodness. Nor, indeed, can His will move Him to be severe toward those**

were cut off because they did not believe. They are the ones who stumbled at the stumbling stone. **Consider God’s reaction to them.**

- They could not enter the promised land (Psa 95:10-11).
- They died in the wilderness (Heb 3:17).
- He abhorred His own inheritance (Psa 106:40).
- He gave them up to “*their own heart’s lusts*” (Psa 81:12).
- He “*gave them up to worship the host of heaven*” (Acts 7:42).
- “*God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear*” (Rom 11:8).

Gentiles are urged to ponder the goodness of God toward us. On the moral scale, the Gentile world had descended very low, being marked by sins and attitudes of the worst sort. Yet, God was good toward us. Ponder that goodness.

- We obtained righteousness even though we did not seek for it (Rom 9:30).
- God was found of us, even though we did not seek for Him (Rom 10:20a).
- God was manifested to us even though we did not ask (Rom 10:20b).
- We were granted repentance unto life (Acts 11:18).
- Jesus brought Divine favorable judgment to us (Isa 42:1).
- God gave Jesus as a light to us (Isa 42:6; 49:6).
- God lifted up His hand of acceptance to us (Isa 49:22).
- We were made “*fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God*” (Eph 2:19).
- Though from a wild olive tree, we were grafted into the cultured olive tree of Israel (Rom 11:17)
- Although to Israel belongs “*the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came,*” yet we have been made partakers (Rom 9:4-5).

How good it is to ponder “*the goodness of God!*” It is not some abstract trait that we are considering, but something that has been experienced by the Gentile world through Christ Jesus.

PONDER THE POSSIBILITY

“... *if thou continue in His goodness otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*” The Spirit is careful not to leave the door open for the entrance of presumption. The fact that this dreadful sin – the sin of presumption (Psa 19:13) – is so dominant in the Gentile church is not due to any neglect on the part of the Holy Spirit. Rather, it is the outgrowth of corrupted theology that has given human explanation the precedence over Divine articulation. The fact that the things we are considering are generally unknown among professed believers is a remarkable commentary on the conduct of their

Think about the severity of God – think about it long enough, and with understanding enough, that you will do anything and everything to avoid it!

who willingly accept His goodness. This is fundamental to sound theology, as will be shown.

The word “*consider*” is not a cursory word. It does not refer to surface or shallow thinking. This involves extended thought, where the heart and mind dwell on a matter, seeking to understand it. The KJV and NASB use the word “*behold.*” Other versions use the word “*see,*”^{BBE} “*notice,*”^{NLT} and “*remember.*”^{NJB}

Coming from the Greek word *ἵδω*, this word means to perceive, become aware of, or come to know something. It is a term denoting understanding and perception. The Spirit is not merely telling us to look at God’s goodness and severity, but to ponder them until we gain some understanding of them – **understanding that will assist us in avoiding God’s severity and obtaining His goodness.**

CONSIDER THE SEVERITY OF GOD

“... *on them which fell, severity.*” Those who “*fell*” are the branches that

- Their own table was “*made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense unto them*” (Rom 11:9).
- Their eyes were “*darkened*” and their backs bowed down with weighty burdens (Rom 11:10).
- Their house was left desolate (Matt 23:38).
- He has allowed Jerusalem to be “*trodden down of the Gentiles*” (Lk 21:24).

None of these judgments were arbitrary. There was a cause for them all – a cause that was induced by human unbelief, indifference, and even obstinance. This is a revelation of God’s reaction to unbelief and rejection. No amount of fanciful theology can change that reaction. Think about the severity of God – think about it long enough, and with understanding enough, that you will do anything and everything to avoid it!

CONSIDER THE GOODNESS OF GOD

“... *but toward thee, goodness.*” We

shepherds. It is inexcusable!

Continuance in the goodness of God is NOT automatic! If it was, such a word would never have been spoken. **God is not good to people regardless of what they do!** If He was, the unbelieving Israelites would have been allowed to enter into Canaan, and Jerusalem never would have been given over to the Gentiles. It does not require unusual insight to comprehend this.

There is a circumference within which men experience God's goodness, and they are to remain in it. This is expressed in a variety of ways in Scripture. All of these are addressed to those who are in Christ.

- ❑ *"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live"* (Rom 8:13).
- ❑ *"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel"* (Col 1:21-23).
- ❑ *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth"* (Col 3:1-2).
- ❑ *"While it is said, To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation"* (Heb 3:15).
- ❑ *"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall"* (2 Pet 1:10).
- ❑ *"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not"* (Gal 6:9).

- ❑ *"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us"* (2 Tim 2:12).
- ❑ *"But Christ as a Son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end"* (Heb 3:6).
- ❑ *"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end"* (Heb 3:14).
- ❑ *"But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin"* (1 John 1:7).
- ❑ *"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love"* (John 15:10).

What kind of theology would permit "Christians" to ignore these admonitions and still remain in God's goodness? Such notions only come by failing to consider the "severity of God," demonstrated extensively in Israel, His chosen people.

These requirements are not to be shouted from Sinai, or approached as harsh and condemning Law. They declare how we may remain in God's goodness, not provoking Him, but bringing pleasure to Him (Col 1:10; 3:20; 1 Thess 2:4; 1 John 3:22; 1 Cor 7:32).

Otherwise . . .

"... otherwise thou **also** shalt be cut off." Consider the unavoidable result of not remaining in God's goodness! Just like the stubborn Israelites, you will be "cut off." It appears to me that the gravity of this text has not registered on the Christian community. Provocative and displeasing conduct is not at all uncommon among those wearing the name of Christ. This unbecoming conduct is not limited to immoral involvements. That is too obvious. Before a Christian can become immoral, a great deal of neglect and hardness of heart

must take place.

The failure of professed believers to seek the things that are above, add the virtues of grace to their lives, and fight the good fight of faith, is evidence they are about to be cut off! No person can remain in God's goodness who does not "go on to perfection." It simply is not possible to occupy the place where His goodness is experienced if we neglect His salvation, do not keep the rejoicing of the hope, or are not steadfast unto the end. Those who suggest such a thing is possible have simply lied, doing great damage to the people of God. If the spiritual condition of the modern church can be truthfully justified, the first thirty-nine books of our Bible can be ripped out and thrown away. In such a case, they would have no message for us. The irony of the situation is that some forms of stunted theology have actually done this, saying that God has obviated the first thirty-nine books of the Bible. The postulate is too foolish to dignify by further discussion.

ARE THESE WORDS TOO HARSH?

Admittedly, these are hard words. They sound unusually harsh to those accustomed to words of fleshly culture, but spiritual depravity. Should your mind imagine that what I have said is too coarse or severe, consider the following.

- ❑ How serious is it to be "cut off?"
- ❑ How serious is it to be deprived of God's goodness?
- ❑ What is worth being subjected to the severity of God?
- ❑ Why does the Spirit issue such a stern warning if the matter is really inconsequential?

No person of sound spiritual mind will object to stern warnings that come from heaven! They will become an incentive to press relentlessly toward the goal, refusing to be anchored to this world.

GOD IS ABLE

"²³ And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in

again." Here is a most wonderful affirmation concerning Israel. Again, the words are meaningless and pointless if

Israel has been totally cut off, so as never again to be restored. **Just as surely as God is always severe toward those**

who do not believe, just that surely He is good toward those who do believe!

Those who suggest that Israel has been irremediably cut off have affirmed that God has consigned them to reprobacy, from which they cannot recover. Were God capable of dealing with masses of people in this manner, the Gentile world would never have been offered salvation.

The point is that the present condition of Israel is precisely the same as that of we Gentiles prior to coming into Christ. They are dominated by unbelief, and so were we!

THEY ALSO

By saying *“they also,”* the Spirit means that God will honor faith in the Jews just as surely as He did in us. Both Jew and Gentile are received on the same basis – **faith**. Both Jew and Gentile are rejected on the same basis – **unbelief!**

IF THEY DO NOT CONTINUE IN UNBELIEF

The *“unbelief”* in the Israelites relates to their rejection of Jesus Christ. Of all of the benefits that were given to them, the greatest was their *“time of visitation,”* when Jesus *“came unto His own”* (Lk 19:44; John 1:11). As long as they *“continue in unbelief,”* the *“severity of God”* will be toward them.

Yet, in this expression, the Spirit pushes open the door of hope, allowing for Paul’s prayer for Israel, *“that they might be saved”* (10:1). It is important to remember the people as a whole are under consideration, not merely individuals. The Spirit has already established that God has never rendered it impossible for individuals within Israel to be saved, Paul himself being a chief example. Our text is speaking of the nation as a whole. The Spirit suggests it is quite possible for them NOT to *“continue in unbelief.”* Why would any man dare to say this was not possible?

WILL BE GRAFTED IN

As a people, if they do not continue on in unbelief, they will be placed again into the tree that grows from the root of

Abraham. They will again partake of the root and fatness of their own olive tree.

Some will imagine that because the re-grafting of Israel is represented as conditional, that it is not a promise – only a possibility. But this is a total misrepresentation of the case. The Spirit will show this is a promise. What He is revealing here is that sound reason fully supports the Divine intention. The ONLY thing that presently excludes Israel from the blessing is their unbelief. Of course, that is the only thing that excludes any one from it!

The Prophets often spoke of this grafting, using different language that referred to Israel’s restoration to favor. The new covenant He would make *“with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah”* would involve a change of nature, fellowship with God, and the remission of sin (Jer 31:31-34) – all aspects of being grafted into the natural olive tree. They would receive a *“new heart and a new spirit,”* the *“stony heart”* would be

The possibility affirmed in our text is given against the backdrop of the promises of God. If this is not the case, the statements are mere philosophy and conjecture, something in which God does not indulge, particularly when speaking of His great salvation.

removed from them, God’s Spirit would be put within them, and they would walk in His ways (Ezek 36:26-27) – all aspects of being grafted into the natural olive tree.

Even Moses promised Israel, *“the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live”* (Deut 30:6) – all aspects of being grafted into the natural olive tree.

The possibility affirmed in our text is given against the backdrop of the promises of God. If this is not the case, the statements are mere philosophy and conjecture, something in which God does not indulge, particularly when speaking of His great salvation.

GOD IS ABLE!

“... for God is able to graft them in again.” The Spirit immediately points us to the power of God, for there is no other way that Israel can be again grafted into their own tree.

Not Theorizing

The Spirit never points us to the ability of God unless what is said can be accomplished. He never theorizes about Divine ability! God is able to make the believer with a weak conscience *“to stand”* (Rom 14:4). He is *“able”* to make grace so abundant to us that we will always have sufficient resources, and be able to *“abound unto every good work”* (2 Cor 9:8). He is *“able to subdue all things unto Himself”* (Phil 3:21). Ponder how He is *“able to keep”* what you have committed unto Him until the last day (2 Tim 1:12), or how the Lord Jesus is *“able to succor them that are tempted”* (Heb 2:18). Think how Jesus is *“able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him”* (Heb 7:25), and how God *“is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy”* (Jude 24).

Is there anything about those affirmations that suggest they will NOT take place, or that we cannot rely upon them being fulfilled? Indeed not! And, that is the category of Divine affirmations into which the grafting in of Israel is placed! **The ability of God is never introduced for mere speculation, but to induce both faith and hope.**

The grafting in of Israel does require the power of God. It certainly cannot be accomplished by the fervent desires of godly men, else Paul’s own desire would have brought it to pass. This is the kind of power it takes to raise up a valley of

scattered with bleached bones, making them a great army (Ezek 37). It is the kind of power that Jesus employs when He speaks, raising people from death in trespasses and sins (John 5:25-27).

The statement, “*God is able to graft them in again,*” forbids men to imagine that He will not do it! **Nowhere are we urged to trust in a God who can do something, but will not!** God’s ability

does not violate His nature or His promises. It is always employed to accomplish His purposes. This should be evident enough, without need of further discussion.

DIVINE GRAFTING

“²⁴ ***For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?***” This is a section of Divine reasoning that reveals the absolute reasonableness of Israel being restored to favor. When believed, it will produce humility among the Gentiles, and hope among the Israelites.

WILD BY NATURE

Unlike the Israelites who were “*cut off,*” or “*cast away,*” the Gentiles were not withered branches lying on the ground—branches coming from a good tree. Rather, we were growing on a rejected tree, one which was “*wild by nature.*” It was an uncultivated tree, not not being tended by the God of heaven. It had neither the Law nor the prophets, and received neither promises nor blessings from the Lord of glory. This tree was an “*corrupt tree,*” and could produce no “*good fruit*” (Lk 6:43). **Unlike Israel, it was not the result of Divine promise.**

Those on this tree are described as “*sinner of the Gentiles*” (Gal 2:15), “*children of wrath*” (Eph 2:3), and “*having no hope, and without God in the world*” (Eph 2:12). **How likely is it that such people could be removed from their corrupt tree and grafted into one blessed and cultivated by God?** Those who love to think of possibilities from a human point of view should ponder this! As Gentiles, what person or system could have changed our condition?

Yet, the great God of heaven cut us out of the “*olive tree which is wild by nature,*” and grafted us into “*a cultivated olive tree.*” What is more, this was done “*contrary to nature,*” **wholly unsupported by any**

natural laws, whether of probability or reason. You cannot account for the acceptance of the Gentiles apart from God Himself! He did it independently of any natural process, and in stark contradiction of anything and everything having to do with temporality.

In view of this, the Gentile church should be in a state of constant praise, moving on to perfection, and bringing forth fruit to God! I will go so far as to say that where the truth of this text is perceived, those things will take place. Where the fruit of praise and growth are not found,

read, “*He will be far more eager to graft the Jews back into the tree where they belong,*”^{NLT} and “*how much easier will it be for them, the branches that naturally belong there, to be grafted on to the olive tree which is their own.*”^{NJB}

Speaking as a man, it is more likely for Israel to be restored than for Gentiles to be saved at all. There is a greater likelihood of Israel being saved than of the Gentile world! From the standpoint of possibility, it is easier for God to restore Israel than to open the door of faith to the Gentiles. From the standpoint of

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this truth is not being perceived. I know of no exceptions to this observation. The existence of lethargy and ignorance within the Gentile church is a sin of the greatest magnitude. In my judgment, it is not possible to overstate its seriousness.

NATURAL BRANCHES

“... *how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?*” The possibility of the Gentiles being saved confirms the possibility of Israel being saved! If the promises of the Gentiles being saved were fulfilled, “*much more*” the promises of Israel being restored will be fulfilled!

“*How much more!*” Other versions

probability, it is more likely that He will do so.

That is the reasoning of this verse, and it is absolutely impregnable! It demolishes bastions of thought that deny the restoration of the Jews, showing them to be the products of unbelief and spiritual insanity. To say Israel has been cut off without remedy is to deny both the power and promises of God. I cannot begin to imagine how God will regard those who have perpetrated doctrines that exclude, and even deny, that He will recover His people Israel. He has said so much on this matter, that the mouths of such men must be stopped. They reproach God, Jesus, the Prophets and the Apostles.

BLINDNESS IN PART

“²⁵ For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;’²⁷ For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.’”

AVOIDING IGNORANCE

Other versions read, *“I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery,”*^{NASB} and, *“I want you to be quite certain, brothers, of this mystery.”*^{NJB}

In the Kingdom of God, ignorance concerning the revealed will of God is never justified. This is particularly true in the matter of His dealings with the people of Israel. No man of God will be content when ignorance dominates the people of God on this matter. Understand that Paul is speaking through the inspiration of God, being constrained by His fellowship with Christ, and motivated by His knowledge of God. This being the case, it is proper to say God does not want us ignorant of the matter being considered, else He would not have moved Paul to write about it.

WISE IN YOUR OWN OPINION

The reason for dispelling any ignorance on this matter of Israel is to deliver men from the vanity of human opinion: *“lest you should be wise in your own opinion,”* or *“wise in your own estimation,”*^{NASB} or *“to save you from congratulating yourselves on your own good sense.”*^{NJB} **While religious men tend to vaunt human wisdom, there is no place for it in the Kingdom of God.** It is something from which we must be delivered at all cost!

Here the Lord seeks to stop the Gentiles from glorying over the Jews. It is also designed to awaken those who were

slumbering in the full light of the Gospel, imagining they were excepted by God while committing the very sins that brought Israel’s present condition upon them.

BLINDNESS IN PART

“... blindness in part has happened to Israel.” Other versions read, *“a partial hardening has happened to Israel,”*^{NASB} *“Israel has experienced a hardening in part,”*^{NIV} *“a hardening has come upon part of Israel,”*^{NRSV} and *“part of Israel had its mind hardened.”*^{NJB} I cannot conceive of a statement being any clearer! All of Israel has not been blinded, or hardened, but only a part of it! All of them

The thought occurs to me that some might not believe God can fix, or appoint, times and epochs. This trait of God, however, has been clearly revealed, so there is no justification for doubting it.

have not been cut off, but only a part of them. The whole nation has not been rejected, but only a part of it.

Let it be clear that God is not speaking here of, what is called, “spiritual Israel,” a term that is not used in any standard version of Scripture. Our text is still dealing with the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – Paul’s *“kinsmen according to the flesh.”*

The idea is not that their blindness was partial, but that the number blinded was partial. All of the nation was not blinded. Of course, that indicates they are, in fact, still a nation, else this statement would make no sense. There is still, in God’s eyes, a body of people called Israel. He will now show that He has a purpose for them that will not be frustrated.

THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES

The partial blindness that has *“happened to Israel”* is only *“UNTIL”* a Divinely appointed event or time. That point is *“the fullness of the Gentiles,”* a most intriguing term. Other versions read, *“until the full number of the Gentiles has come in,”*^{NIV/NRSV/NJB/NAB} and *“until the complete number of Gentiles comes to Christ.”*^{NLT}

The word *“fullness”* is slightly ambiguous, which seems to me to be intentional. It denotes a filling up, completeness, or sum total. It refers to the accession of the Gentiles into the body of Christ – being *“added to the church,”* so to speak (Acts 2:47). I do not understand this to mean that God has determined a fixed numbers of Gentiles to be added to the church. Rather, He has appointed a juncture in time when Gentiles coming to Him will not be the principle activity. At that point in time, (for *“times”* or *“epochs”* belong to God alone, Acts 1:7) Israel’s blindness will end. **The God who imposed blindness upon them can cause it to cease.** That is the point of this text.

Not A Strange Thought

The thought occurs to me that some might not believe God can fix, or appoint, times and epochs. This trait of God, however, has been clearly revealed, so there is no justification for doubting it. *“It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority”*^{NASB} (Acts 1:7). Speaking of humanity, the Spirit said through Paul, *“He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live”*^{NIV} (Acts 17:26).

- God appointed the precise day when the flood would come (Gen 7:13).
- The birth of Isaac was at an *“appointed time”* (Gen 18:14).
- The exact day of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt was Divinely appointed (Ex 12:41).
- Joseph’s time in prison was appointed (Psa 105:17-19).
- The exact duration of the Babylonian

captivity was arbitrarily appointed by God (Jer 29:10).

- God revealed to Daniel things pertaining to “the appointed time of the end” (Dan 8:19; 11:27,29,35).
- Jesus was born at an appointed time – “the fullness of the time” (Gal 4:4).
- The day of Pentecost came at an appointed time – “when the day of Pentecost was fully come” (Acts 2:1).
- The precise time of the day of judgment has been “appointed” (Acts 17:31).

Why should any person be stunned by a point in time called “the times of the Gentiles?” God has revealed sufficient about His Person and purpose that this should not take us by surprise. There is a point in time called “the fulness of the Gentiles,” and it is a line of demarcation that will change the partial blindness of Israel. It is our business not to question it. Among other things, this shows that the Gentiles are not the focus of the salvation of God. While the determination has been made to “preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15), and “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19), God has revealed that it is in order to provoke Israel to jealousy.

Jesus Speaks

The Lord Jesus Himself declared this limitation from the standpoint of time. “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Lk 21:24). With His heart heavy, Jesus unveiled somewhat of the future to His inquiring disciples. He spoke of dark and bleak times – times of fierce judgment and punishment. The holy city, where God had placed His name, and where holy associations had been developed, would be devastated. But in the midst of it all, He revealed things would not remain that way. It would only be “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” He gave no indication that there would ever be a point prior to those “times” when it would be inappropriate to speak of that fullness.

ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED

“And so all Israel shall be saved . . .” Other versions read, “and thus all Israel will be saved,”^{NASB} “And so all Israel will get salvation,”^{BBE} and “and this is how all Israel will be saved.”^{NJB} It is never out of order to say these words: “all Israel shall be saved.” These are revealed words. They are words taught by the Holy Spirit. At some point, they should find their way into our mouths, whether we comprehend the fullness of their scope or not.

The Reasoning

The reasoning is this. Israel’s rejection has always been partial, and never total. However, there is a point in

into their tree, the focus here is the nation itself. However, the sense of the text is in no way altered whether we think of “Israel” as the whole of the redeemed, or of those from the nation itself. If the former, salvation shall not reach its culmination until Jews and Gentiles are brought together into one grand family. If the latter, God’s work with Israel will not be completed until He who poured upon them the spirit of deep sleep causes the light to shine upon them.

While I do allow for both views, it seems to neutralize the text to suddenly introduce the whole of the church at this point. From the beginning of the ninth chapter, the spotlight has been shining on Paul’s “kinsmen according to the flesh.” The Spirit has accounted for their distinction. He has also explained their spiritual obtuseness. He has told us of God’s intention to provoke them to jealousy through the Gentiles. The possibility of them being turned has been declared, as well as its probability. The Spirit has affirmed their blindness is partial, and that a time has been appointed when their condition would change. Further, following this verse He will continue to elaborate upon Israel.

It seems to me to be something less than reasonable that He would here turn our attention to the whole of the body of Christ, using the words “all Israel.” If this refers to both Jews and Gentiles, we must ponder that He is speaking of the future. That would mean He was referring to Gentiles presently blinded like Israel, yet who would eventually be illuminated – something I do not believe those who contend “Israel” refers to the church are willing to affirm.

The Deliverer Will Come

“. . . as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.’ David prayed for this to take place. ‘Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad’ (Psa 14:7).

For centuries, there remained a small remnant within them, while the mass of them remained in the grip of unbelief and spiritual slumber. But a point in time will come, as appointed by God, when the mass of them will turn to the Lord and no longer be dominated by spiritual blindness.

time when their salvation will be total, and not partial. This should not be taken too far, viewing it from the standpoint of mathematical counts. The emphasis is that the general condition of Israel will be reversed. For centuries, there remained a small remnant within them, while the mass of them remained in the grip of unbelief and spiritual slumber. But a point in time will come, as appointed by God, when the mass of them will turn to the Lord and no longer be dominated by spiritual blindness. If that seems like an impossible thing, “with God all things are possible” (Matt 19:26).

Is the Whole Church in Reference?

While the word “Israel” can also include Gentiles who have been grafted

Isaiah's Prophecy

Isaiah declared this would come to pass. *"And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD"* (Isa 59:20). This differs slightly from our text. Isaiah said the Redeemer would come *"to Zion."* Our text says He will come *"out of Zion."* Isaiah said the Redeemer would come **to** those who turned from transgression. Our text says He would come to *"turn away ungodliness from Jacob."*

There is no conflict in the passages, and we do not do well to attempt to cause such a conflict. The Spirit is providing a New Covenant view of an Old Covenant promise. Isaiah spoke of Jesus coming to His people, and being perceived by those who were discontent with transgression. Paul speaks of the Savior working from within them, forgiving their sins, and *"banishing ungodliness"*^{NR^{SV}} from among them. In other words, their sins would be remitted and they would receive a new heart and spirit.

Zion

"Zion" refers to the place of God's dwelling, particularly as it relates to the Jews. The name was frequently applied to Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:6-9). It appears from the Prophets that it was also the place where the temple was built (Isa 4:5; 8:18; Jer 31:6; Mic 4:7).

The meaning of the prophecy is that the Savior will become apparent to the Israelites from within their own land.

The Glorified Deliverer?

While some are persuaded this

prophecy will be fulfilled by a fleshly, or external, appearance of Jesus to the Jews, I cannot concur with that opinion. That would require the merging of the eternal order with the temporal order, a glorified Christ with a people in the body. I do not believe this is possible. The impossibility of such a thing is precisely why God only allowed Moses to see His *"back."* God explained, *"Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live"* (Ex 33:20,23). Flesh is simply not adapted to behold the unveiled glory of God.

Jesus is presently glorified (Acts 3:13). For Him to appear among men without destroying them, saved or not, would require a diminishment of His Person, if not a total hiding of His glory. There is not a syllable of Scripture that remotely suggests Jesus will ever do such a thing. Nor, indeed, is there a solitary word that suggests men will ever be able to behold the full glory of Christ while they remain in the body. Nowhere does the Spirit indicate that the temporal and eternal orders will be merged. Rather, when the new heavens and earth appear, the old will be done away (Rev 21:1). Both of these events are associated with the appearance of Jesus (2 Pet 3:10-13).

The Deliverer coming out of Zion, therefore, cannot refer to a bodily return of Christ.

This is God's Covenant

"For this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." Immediately, the Spirit shows us that this is in strict keeping with God's covenant with Israel – a covenant He has not forgotten. This cannot refer to the Gentiles, for God made no covenant to take away

their sins. That covenant belonged exclusively to Israel. *"And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them . . ."* (Isa 59:20-21).

Who can forget the marvelous promise of Jeremiah – and it is related to the covenant God would make with the houses of Israel and Judah: *"for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more"* (Jer 31:34).

This is not the only time this covenant is mentioned. Let us hear what Paul is promising would be fulfilled.

- ❑ *"But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end"* (Isa 45:17).
- ❑ *"In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory"* (Isa 45:25).
- ❑ *"In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve"* (Jer 50:20).
- ❑ *"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you"* (Ezek 36:25).

Remember, God speaks with the panorama of His eternal purpose before Him. He does not make vain promises, or declare things that will only be abandoned at some point in time. Israel's restoration is a matter of covenant! He has said He would take away their sins!

ENEMIES, YET BELOVED

"²⁸ Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." You will notice how relentless the Holy Spirit is in establishing this point. Sometimes I marvel that I could ever have been so

blinded as to contend Israel has been totally rejected. Among other things, such a contention reveals how utterly unreasonable the flesh is. It simply cannot agree with God. To put it in words that the Holy Spirit teaches, *"But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they*

are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor 2:14).

Now, in a few words, the Spirit will spread the working of God before us. He will show how Israel is viewed from the heavens. He will also affirm what God has determined cannot be revoked. While it is apparent, I feel compelled to remind you that these are words from God. As such,

they are precise, and are not to be questioned.

VIEWED FROM THE GOSPEL

“From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake.” ^{NASB}

Once again, the Spirit points out that the Gentiles have received the Gospel because the Israelites rejected it. Presently, they are enemies of the Gospel itself, alienated from God, and opponents of Christ – all because they do not believe. Yet, from an even higher vantage point, this has occurred in order that the Gospel might come to us Gentiles. A Divine purpose is being fulfilled by the enmity of the Israelites. They are enemies for the sake of the Gentiles! How foolish, therefore, for Gentiles to boast against the Jews as though they had been permanently rejected and replaced by the Gentiles. Nothing could be further from the truth!

VIEWED FROM THE ELECTION

“... but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.” ^{NASB} The Gospel view is not the only view! Or, to put it another way, **the marvelous salvation of the Gentiles, or the nations, is not the only purpose of God.** God has something larger in mind than reaching the nations, or heathen, and we do well to remember it.

There is the matter of *“the election,”* or *“God’s choice!”* This represents the highest consideration of things. It is the most precise context in which God’s workings are to be considered. Men may steer away from God’s election, or choice, but the Spirit does not. I understand this subject can be corrupted, but we ought not shun to declare it simply because wicked men may corrupt it. This is the way in which the Holy Spirit speaks about this matter.

And what of *“the election,”* or *“God’s choice?”* How is Israel considered within that context? *“They are loved on account of the patriarchs,”* ^{NIV} or, *“beloved for the sake of the fathers.”* ^{NASB} The *“father’s”* are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom the promises were made.

It should not surprise us that the Israelites are loved because of their progenitors. In your own case, *“God for*

Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph 4:32). Abraham, the chief of the patriarchs, knew God would spare many

preservation of the sons of Jacob, or Israel, upon this basis. *“For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are*

Those who declare Israel has been utterly forsaken, and are no longer a people, demean the fathers. They make it appear as though God has forgotten what He promised them. Or, worse yet, that He has abrogated His promises to them.

for the sake of a few (Gen 18:29,31,32). Even though Solomon greatly displeased the God, He did not rend the kingdom from Solomon *“for David thy father’s sake”* (1 Kgs 11:12). This, then, is a Divine manner, and ought to be embraced with great joy.

Those who declare Israel has been utterly forsaken, and are no longer a people, demean the fathers. They make it appear as though God has forgotten what He promised them. Or, worse yet, that He has abrogated His promises to them.

GOD’S GIFTS AND CALLING

“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” ^{NKJV} Here is a word that has puzzled theologians. Such men ought to believe Divine utterances rather than making vain attempts to blend them with the theologies they have invented.

Other versions read, *“for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable,”* ^{NIV} *“For the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of,”* ^{ASV} *“Because God’s selection and His mercies may not be changed,”* ^{BBE} *“For God’s gifts and His call can never be withdrawn,”* ^{NLT} and *“There is no change of mind on God’s part about the gifts He has made or of His choice.”* ^{NJB} From a linguistic point of view, then, there really is no question at all about what the Spirit has said.

Like it or not, it is true that God does not change. That is precisely why His gifts and calling cannot be changed or revoked. In fact, God Himself accounts for the

not consumed” (Mal 3:6). Even the mouth of Balaam, who prophesied for wages, spoke this truth. *“God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?”* (Num 23:19).

“Gifts “ and “Calling”

“Gifts and calling” refer to Divine favors that are not based upon merit or worthiness. That, of course, is why they are irrevocable – because they were not given because of the worthiness of those receiving them.

It is important to consider that the Spirit is not speaking of every gift provided by God. For example, He said of giving Israel a king (Saul), *“I gave thee a king in Mine anger, and took him away in My wrath”* (Hos 13:11). Here He is speaking of *“gifts and calling”* as they relate more specifically to His eternal purpose as wrought out through Abraham. The Lord promised Abraham, *“And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God”* (Gen 17:7-8). That is *“the gifts and calling”* of reference, and they *“cannot be revoked.”*

The point is that the choice of, and promises to, the Israelites as a whole

cannot be revoked. They were not made because of their attainment, and they cannot be revoked because of the

deficiencies of some of them. All of this allows for the existence of a sanctifying remnant, and the cutting off of those who

did not believe. This should not confuse us, for the aim of the text is to convince us of the future restoration of Israel.

DISOBEDIENCE AND MERCY

“³⁰ For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience,³¹ even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.” The Spirit will now pull back the curtain that obscures God’s eternal purpose, revealing Divine deliberation. These are high and lofty vistas, and will challenge stilted views of the Lord and His workings. But we should not shun to take them into our minds and hearts. Far too much time is being spent by the religious masses in the lowlands of human reasoning and explanation. It has not produced a good group of Kingdom thinkers.

GENTILE DISOBEDIENCE

“Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience.”^{NIV} This is a most appropriate description of our former state. The Spirit vividly describes our condition. *“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another”* (Tit 3:3).

In our text, the Spirit takes the entirety of our former lives and refers to it as *“disobedient to God.”* Older translations read, *“have not believed God.”*^{KJV/WEBSTERS/DOUAY} There is no conflict in the expressions, for unbelief is the epitome, summation, and quintessence of disobedience. All disobedience, or sin, springs from unbelief. Thus Jesus said of the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, *“And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin . . . of sin, because they believe not on me”* (John 16:8-9). How sorely we needed mercy.

And, praise God, we Gentiles did receive mercy! Right here, it is good to

remember how gracious God has been to us. We Gentiles had not received a Law from God, and had no prophets. We were abysmally ignorant of God, even though we were living in His universe. Some have concluded this to mean God could not condemn us because we did not know. But that is a very distorted view. God did not save us out of pity, but by His mercy. As it is written, this was done that *“the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy”* (Rom 15:9). After accounting for our former state – one of *“disobedience”* – the Spirit continued, *“not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”* (Tit 3:5). A constant stream of praise and

now receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you.”^{NIV} As a rule, professing believers are so distant from God that this utterance sounds like insanity. **A people can gauge their proximity to God by how reasonable the Word of God sounds.**

Like it or not, the Spirit gives us a reason for Israel’s disobedience. It is a high reason, but it is intended to be comprehended. That is why it is proclaimed. When we were disobedient, God had mercy upon us because of Israel’s disobedience. Now, they have become disobedient to the Gospel in order that they may receive mercy through the mercy shown to us Gentiles.

The meaning is that the promises

Far too much time is being spent by the religious masses in the lowlands of human reasoning and explanation. It has not produced a good group of Kingdom thinkers.

thanksgiving is in order from the Gentiles, for great mercy has been shown to them!

Why have we Gentiles received mercy? The Spirit calls us to consider the Israelites. *“Yet have now obtained mercy through their (Israel’s) disobedience.”* It is apparent from this passage that this is a foregone conclusion, and is not open for discussion. From this perspective, we Gentiles owe our salvation to the disobedience of the Israelites. God turned **to** us only when He turned **from** them!

ISRAEL’S DISOBEDIENCE

“So they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may

made to Israel would be accomplished through Divine mercy – in full recognition of their defiled state. **They would not be saved because they were His people, but because God had mercy!** If this were not the case, it would have appeared as though they deserved salvation because they were distinguished as God’s people.

The argument presented is simply this. If we Gentiles have been saved by the mercy of God, even though we were disobedient, why will not God do the same for the chosen people, to whom the promises of salvation were given? What form of reasoning would seek to deprive Israel of what we ourselves have received? A lofty consideration, indeed!

THAT HE MIGHT HAVE MERCY

“³² For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.” From beginning to end, “*Salvation is of the Lord*” (Jonah 2:9). In this verse we have yet another affirmation of this fact. Again, it is a high consideration. This is not something men would say – not even some devout religious men. It is, however, what the Lord of glory has said, and it is completely out of order to reject it.

COMMITTED TO DISOBEDIENCE

“*For God has committed them all to disobedience . . .*” Other versions read, “*For God hath concluded them all in unbelief,*”^{KJV} “*For God has shut up all in disobedience,*”^{NASB} “*For God has bound all men over to disobedience,*”^{NIV} “*For God has imprisoned all in disobedience,*”^{NRSV} “*For God has consigned all men to disobedience,*”^{RSV} “*For God delivered all to disobedience.*”^{NAB}

First, note this is something God has done, not man! It is the result of Divine activity, and it has been done with a beneficent purpose in mind. Because God has determined to unveil the magnitude and power of His grace throughout the ages to come (Eph 2:7), He has purposed to save men through His mercy. That salvation will not be realized through a system, a Law, or a series of routines. He will, therefore, enclose men in disobedience, so they will be unable to extricate themselves. He will confine them to that state, so that only His mercy will be able to disengage them.

Now, this confinement to disobedience will not be accomplished without means. He will not, as it were, cause men to be disobedient, for that would bring no glory to His Person.

Rather, He will shut them up to disobedience, imprisoning them in it.

This has been done in two ways: one for the Israelites, and one for the Gentiles. Both ways confirm that the entirety of humanity has been corrupted in Adam. Both declare that man cannot save himself, regardless of the tools or advantages given to him.

In summary, the Israelites were “shut up” to disobedience by the Law. The Jews were given a holy, spiritual, and good Law. It defined sin, told what was to be avoided, and what was to be done. Sufficient promises and curses were given to provide the proper incentive to fulfill that Law. However, the “*strength of sin*” proved to be that very Law (1 Cor 15:56). It demanded more of them than they were able to give, offered no mercy, and provided no strength. They were thus “*bound over*” to disobedience.

The Gentiles were “*shut up*” to disobedience by ignorance (Eph 4:18). God withheld Divine illumination from them. He gave them no Prophets, and left them to themselves. They were in His world which yielded an unwavering and consistent testimony of His “*eternal power and Godhead.*” Yet, they stumbled on in their ignorance, being disobedient to the testimony of nature and their conscience as well. They did not have sufficient moral or spiritual resources to extricate themselves from their dilemma. Thus, God had also “*imprisoned them*” in disobedience.

MERCY ON ALL

God had gracious intentions in this arrangement. It was that “*He might have mercy on all.*” Eventually, through the

Gospel of Christ, the “*record that God gave of His Son*” (1 John 5:10), men are brought to realize their impotency, and “*call upon the name of the Lord.*” The Lord is then able to show mercy to Jew and Gentiles alike, lifting them from the morass of sin, and placing them on the foundation of His Son. There is no different Gospel for the Israelites, as some affirm. There is only One salvation, and one Gospel that declares it. There are no other Saviors, and hence can be no other real Gospels.

The idea is not that God will surely have mercy on every Jew and every Gentile. Rather, it is that both Jew and Gentile will be saved through His mercy. The Jew will be so saved even though he did not keep the Law. The Gentile will be so saved even though he refused to honor the testimony of nature and his own conscience.

Both Law and nature have this in common: they prove mankind is spiritually impotent. They confirm that the malignancy of sin cannot be avoided outside of Jesus Christ.

Those who minimize the mercy of God push salvation away, judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life (Acts 13:46). Those who see their need of mercy are sure to receive it, for they have learned the truth God seeks to teach them.

This passage has shown us that the Jews have not been excluded from the salvation of God that was promised to them. They will, however, receive it in such a manner as will destroy all fleshly boasting and pride of life. In this, the Gospel will be primary.

AN EXPRESSION OF PRAISE

“³³ Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!³⁴ For who has known the mind

of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?³⁵ Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?³⁶ For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to

whom be glory forever. Amen.”

Here is a befitting doxology to the teaching the Spirit has placed before us. He has traced all things back to God, and

now He moves the Apostle to break forth in insightful praise. Keep in mind, what has been said about the Israelites, Paul's "kinsmen according to the flesh," has prompted this outbreak of praise.

THE WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! God's dealings with and purposes for the Jews are the outworking of His wisdom and knowledge. Both are deep and rich. They are deep in the sense of being profound, far beyond the narrow boundaries of human wisdom and knowledge. That is why it is such a serious thing to take what has been made known in this section of Romans and pour it into a theological mold. This is like new wine that will shatter the brittle wineskins of human theology.

The Wisdom of God

If the salvation of Israel seems beyond the border of possibility, think of the wisdom of God. Consider how deep and profound it is, and what richness comes from it. This is the wisdom by which the heavens were made (Psa 136:5). God founded the earth by His wisdom, and maintains all of its precise movements and activities (Prov 3:19). How can it be that the fulfillment of His promises to Israel could prove too challenging for His great wisdom? What is there about their conversion that demands more wisdom than He possesses?

The Knowledge of God

If you stumble at the idea of Israel having ungodliness turned away from them, ponder the "knowledge of God." What is it that God did not know when He called Abraham, chose the nation of Israel, and made marvelous promises to them? Were His promises shouted off the top of His head, so to speak, without regard to His knowledge, which sees all things? Indeed not! God always speaks with what He knows and purposes in mind. No Word of God is every uttered, and no purpose ever conceived, independently of His wisdom and knowledge.

Rather than stumbling at the declarations of this text, stand up and praise God for the depth and riches of His wisdom and knowledge! That is the only acceptable response to these teachings!

THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD

"How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! Other versions read, "How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!,"^{NASB} and "How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!"^{NIV} **What God determines is not subject to human analysis.** His judgments and ways extend far beyond the small perimeter of man's powers of

"knows the thoughts of man" without having to be told them (Psa 94:11). But where is the man who knows the thoughts of God without having to be told what they are? Let such a person step forth! Who can decipher what God is thinking by looking to nature? What person is there who can figure out the purposes and intents of God by surveying the heavens or analyzing rocks and mountains? The question put before us is a Divine way of saying such a person will not and cannot be found! Nothing – absolutely nothing – of God's mind can be known unless He tells it. What is more, He has told us His mind concerning Israel.

Who is a counselor to Him?

"Who has become His counselor?" Or, "who has taken part in His purposes?"^{BBE} At what point is God ever lacking in understanding, so that another must give Him advice? In recent years, some have affirmed that God really does not know everything. David spoke of such people. They say, "How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?" (Psa 73:11). These people imagine their ways are hidden from God, but they are not. The Divine assessment of such people is this: "Behold, these are the ungodly" (Psa 73:12).

Knowing these things, how foolish to doubt, or even disbelieve, the revelations of the Lord! Those who balk at what He declares Himself to have determined are taking the role of counselors, seeking to instruct the Lord. He will not hear them!

Knowing these things, how foolish to doubt, or even disbelieve, the revelations of the Lord! Those who balk at what He declares Himself to have determined are taking the role of counselors, seeking to instruct the Lord. He will not hear them!

Who puts God in obligation?

"Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?" Or, "Who has given anything to him, so that His presents come only as a debt returned?"^{NJB} What person has moved God into debt? Who is the person who has initiated dialog with God, moving Him to reply. What person has brought a gift to God without being moved by Him to do so? Where is such a person? The answer ought to be obvious. No such person exists, or can exist!

The Lord asked Job, "Who has given

perception. If God does not tell us something about His ways and judgments, they will never be known. They cannot be discovered through academic disciplines, or be discerned simply by frequent exposure to their effects.

WHO IS THERE?

"For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?"³⁵ Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him? These are principles relating to God – similar to laws that can be neither fully comprehended nor contradicted.

Who has known the mind of the Lord? That is, "who has knowledge of the mind of the Lord?"^{BBE}, or "who can know what the Lord is thinking?"^{NLT} God

to Me that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine”^{NASB} (Job 41:11). The idea is that no person has ever given God an advantage. No one has ever increased His wealth, or added to His Person.

Is it not reasonable, therefore, that God can do what He has declared in this section of Scripture? Can He not conclude all in unbelief so that He can have mercy upon all? Can He not pour out the spirit of sleep upon Israel that He might open the eyes of the Gentiles? Can He not provoke the Jews to jealousy through the mercy He has given to the Gentiles? Was He not true and righteous in the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Were the promises of restoration given through the Prophets a departure from the character of God?

OF, THROUGH, AND TO

“For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.” Another version reads, “Everything there is comes from him and is caused by him and exists for him. To him be glory for ever! Amen.”^{NJB} What a sweeping statement and fitting conclusion to this remarkable passage! It puts the glory where it belongs! It is as though the Spirit led the Apostle to conclude abruptly, not engaging in endless explanations. Enough has been revealed to saturate the capacities of man. Any further explanations would extend further than we can reach. What the Spirit now says is applied to “all things,” or “everything.” Nothing is excluded, particularly in regard to the salvation of Jews and Gentiles.

“Of Him.” That is, “because of Him,”^{YLT} or “from Him.”^{NASB} God is the Originator, the Beginning, and the First of everything! In the matter of the

reconciliation of the world to God, “all things are of God” (2 Cor 5:18). This is another way of saying His will is the origin of all things, and nothing can exist independently of it. If that is too difficult to receive, think of it this way. When God is finished with the present heavens and earth, He will simply dispense with them (2 Pet 3:7). There will be no conflict with those who are otherwise minded. When He is finished with the devil and his angels, he will have them cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:10). There will be no war, no resistance, or any opposition. He will simply do it. Even they existed only by the will of God, for when He desires for them to be taken away, they will instantly be removed.

This truth especially applies to the salvation of men, whether Jew or Gentile. **However a person may choose to think of salvation, the cause of it can only be traced back to God Himself.** That is another reason why “All Israel will be saved.”

“Through Him.” Things not only originate with God, they are carried out by Him. He has not set laws in motion to fulfill His good pleasure independently of His involvement. Everything was made “through Him” (John 1:3). The world was “made through Him” (John 1:10). The saints are being saved from wrath “through Him” (Rom 5:9). God carries out His own will, causing it to come to pass. That is another reason why “All Israel will be saved.”

“To Him.” That is, everything accrues to His glory, and will ultimately serve His purpose. If God “works all things together for the good” of those who love Him, and are “the called according to His purpose” (Rom 8:28), you may be sure all things will work together for His glory

and good! A similar thing is said of the Lord Jesus. “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him”^{NKJV} (Col 1:16). All crowns will be cast before the throne of God, for everything is “to Him” and “for Him” (Rev 4:10). That is another reason why “All Israel will be saved.”

“Glory forever.” In Christ, we are part of an “eternal purpose.” This is no passing fancy, no fading work, no sun that sets. When all is said and done in the grand redemptive enterprise, all of the glory will go to God. All of the credit and honor will be His through Christ Jesus. Over and over we are reminded of this reality.

- ❑ “To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen” (Rom 16:27).
- ❑ “To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Gal 1:5).
- ❑ “Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Eph 3:21).
- ❑ “Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Phil 4:20).
- ❑ “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen” (1 Tim 1:17).
- ❑ “To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (1 Pet 5:11).
- ❑ “To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen” (Jude 25).

That, child of God, is another reason why “All Israel will be saved.”

CONCLUSION

We have walked in the high places, and I trust you had “hinds feet” so you could safely navigate in them. These can be your high places, where you feel at home, and the wonderful things of God make sense to you and comfort you. I

know we have dealt with highly controversial matters. But it is man that has made them controversial, not God. These things have been revealed to clarify the things of God, not to mystify them. I urge you to join the growing number of

believers who have a heart’s desire and prayer for Israel, that they might be saved. There is a sense in which you owe your salvation to them. See to it that you do not despise them, do not forget them, and seek for their blessing.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 6/15/2001. Continuing in our overview of the book of Romans, we will be covering verses 1-2 of the twelfth chapter. The theme will be, **“LIVING SACRIFICES FOR GOD.”** When the righteousness of God is imputed to a person, it comes with a responsibility to enter into the will of God with determination. The presentation of our bodies to God is not an option, but an essentiality. This text will show how extensively this matter is involved in our salvation. Our meeting will convene at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>**

GROWTH OF THE JEWISH POPULATION IN ISRAEL		MILITARY BALANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST					
		A report by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (1997)					
		COUNTRY	Regular Troops	Reserves	Total	Tanks	Fighter Aircraft
1880	24,000	EGYPT	440,000	254,000	694,000	3,390	505
1914	90,000	JORDAN	133,650	0	133,650	1,051	101
1931	174,000	IRAQ	382,000	650,000	1,032,000	2,700	330
1939	450,000	IRAN	513,000	250,000	763,000	1,440	318
1948	650,000	SYRIA	421,000	500,000	921,000	4,600	520
1950	1,200,000	SAUDI ARABIA	105,000	57,000	162,000	1,055	322
1958	1,800,000	TOTAL	1,994,650	1,711,000	3,705,650	10,096	2,096
1992	4,250,000						
2000	5,150,000	ISRAEL	175,000	430,000	605,000	4,300	780

WHERE DO THE JEWS LIVE?											
It is estimated that there were 14,600,000 Jew in the world at the end of 2000, dispersed as follows											
COUNTRY	COUNT	COUNTRY	COUNT	COUNTRY	COUNT	COUNTRY	COUNT	COUNTRY	COUNT	COUNTRY	COUNT
United States	5,900,000	Moldova	30,000	India	6,000	Norway	1,500	Netherlands	400	Venezuela	35,000
Israel	5,150,000	Azerbaijan	30,000	Lithuania	6,000	Guatemala	1,200	Virgin Islands	400	Uruguay	33,000
France	600,000	Holland	30,000	Slovakia	6,000	Finland	1,200	Jamaica	300	Panama	7,000
Russia	500,000	Iran	25,000	Columbia	6,000	Paraguay	1,200	Singapore	300	Czech Rep	6,000
Canada	370,000	Turkey	25,000	Greece	5,000	Turkmenistan	1,200	Zaire	300	Tunisia	2,000
Ukraine	350,000	Switzerland	20,000	New Zealand	5,000	Ireland	1,200	Dominican Re	250	Tajikistan	2,000
Argentina	260,000	Sweden	18,000	Kyrgyzstan	4,000	Cuba	1,000	Philippines	250	Ethiopia	400
Brazil	120,000	Georgia	17,000	Bulgaria	3,000	Ecuador	1,000	Syria	250	Kenya	400
South Africa	110,000	Chile	15,000	Estonia	3,000	Monaco	1,000	Thailand	250	LESS THAN 100 IN	
Australia	110,000	Kazakstan	15,000	Peru	3,000	Portugal	1,000	Armenia	200	Guyana	Haiti
Hungary	80,000	Romania	14,000	Puerto Rico	3,000	Zimbabwe	1,000	Bahamas	200	Honduras	Indonesia
Germany	60,000	Latvia	14,000	Costa Rica	2,500	Yemen	800	Surinam	200	Malta	Martinique
Belarus	50,000	Spain	14,000	Hong Kong	2,500	Bosnia	600	South Korea	150	Mozambique	Myanmar
Mexico	40,000	Austria	10,000	Yugoslavia	2,500	Luxembourg	600	Iraq	120	Nambia	Nicaragua
Belgium	40,000	Poland	8,000	Croatia	2,000	Gibraltar	600	El Salvador	120	New Caledoniatt	
Italy	35,000	Denmark	8,000	Japan	2,000	Bolivia	400	Tahiti	120	Sloveniatt	Swaziland
"And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive." (Jeremiah 29:14)										Taiwant	Trinidad
										Tobango	Zambia

SURROUNDED BY HOSTILE MOSLEM NATIONS

COUNTRY	POP	COUNTRY	POP	COUNTRY	POP	COUNTRY	POP	COUNTRY	POP	COUNTRY	POP
Afganistan	26,000,000	Algeria	31,200,000	Azerbaijan	8,000,000	Bahrain	700,000	Egypt	67,300,000	Guinea	8,000,000
Iran	71,000,000	Iraq	24,000,000	Jordan	4,600,000	Kuwait	2,000,000	Kyrgyzstan	4,600,000	Lebanon	3,600,000
Libya	6,000,000	Mali	10,500,000	Mauritania	10,500,000	Morocco	30,000,000	Niger	10,000,000	Oman	2,500,000
Pakistan	139,000,000	Qatar	800,000	Saudi Arabia	21,600,000	Senegal	9,000,000	Somolia	7,200,000	Sudan	34,500,000
Syria	17,300,000	Tajikistan	6,200,000	Tunisia	9,600,000	Turkey	66,000,000	Turkmenistan	2,400,000	Utd Arab	2,400,000
Uzbekistan	24,200,000	Yemen	17,000,000	Palestine Aut	4,000,000	Isr Arabs	1,000,000	684,700,000, 95% Moslem, to Israel's 5,150,000			

Other Moslem nations: Indonesia @ 217,000,000, 87% – India @ 1,000,000,000, 14% – Bangladesh @ 130,000,000, 83% – Nigeria @ 115,000,000, 50% Ethiopia @ 60,000,000, 35% – Malaysia @ 22,000,000, 53% – Kazakstan @ 17,000,000, 47% – Ghana @ 20,000,000, 30% Philippines @ 80,000,000, 5%

Total world Moslem population, 1,200,000,000, consistently against Jews, who number 5,150,000 in Israel

WHERE EUROPE, ASIA, AND AFRICA MEET

