

Book of Romans



Chapter 11

*Theme: Remnant of Israel finding salvation;
remainder of Israel blinded;*

Michael Fronczak
564 Schaeffer Dr.
Coldwater, Michigan 49036

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Romans Chapter 11

Missler General Review

The destiny of Israel—as declared by God Himself—is, strangely, a controversy that divides the denominational churches from the Biblical view. [Study carefully yourself to resolve this in your own mind; it is critical if you are to understand the times in which we live.]

Chapter 9: Israel - Past - elected

Chapter 10: Israel - Present - rejected

Chapter 11: Israel - Future - accepted

10:16ff: Israel Rejected

10:19: “Provoked to jealousy” by the Gentiles

Isa 65:1, 2ff: [sets up Chapter 11...]

3] A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick; 4] Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine’s flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; 5] Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day. 6] Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, 7] Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom. 8] Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants’ sakes, that I may not destroy them all.

Even though unbelieving Israel will be judged, there always will be a remnant...¹

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Let’s see what more Paul has to say on this devastating indictment against Israel and the Jewish people. Open your Bibles to Romans chapter 11. I don’t mind saying that for a number of reasons this is the chapter that I have been yearning to teach you. In fact, this is why I elected to teach Romans in the first place. If all I had time to teach in the Book of Romans was one chapter, this would be the one. But fortunately, we have had the time to go carefully, deeply, slowly into these inspired words; so now we have an extensive background for what Paul is about to say and no excuse to misunderstand. If over the centuries the Church had only heard and believed Paul in Romans 11, we would be a very different, more spiritually powerful and effective body today.²

¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

² <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

McGee: THEME: Remnant of Israel finding salvation; remainder of Israel blinded; reason for setting aside the nation Israel; restoration of the nation Israel; reason for restoring the nation Israel

We will see that God has a future purpose with Israel. In chapter 9 we saw God's past dealings with Israel. In chapter 10 we saw God's present dealings with Israel: a remnant of Israel is finding salvation. Perhaps you are saying, "Well, it must be a very small remnant." It is larger than you might think it is. It is estimated that there are about fifteen million Jews throughout the world, and the percentage of those who are believers is probably much higher than that of the gentile world with its four billion people.

We have seen that the nation rejected Christ and the "by faith" righteousness of God in Christ which was offered to them. And now God has rejected them temporarily as a nation. Two questions naturally arise: Has God permanently rejected them as a nation? In other words, does the nation of Israel have a future? Secondly, are all the promises of the Old Testament nullified by the rejection of Israel? Remember that God had promised primacy to Israel in the Old Testament. He had said they would be the head, not the tail, of the nations (see Deut. 28:13). My friend, all the promises of the Old Testament will have a literal fulfillment. Paul will make that clear.³

BKC: To this point in this major section of Romans (chaps. 9-11) God's personal righteousness and His provided righteousness for people has been displayed primarily in Israel's rejecting Christ and rebelling against God, and in God's choosing and turning to Gentiles in grace. These themes continue in this chapter, but God's sovereign choice also involves His restoring Israel and His being magnified thereby.⁴

³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁴ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

¹I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Missler: Israel's Future: God's Sovereign Choice Fulfilled
Israel's Rejection not Total (vv.1 - 10)

In Greek the question is asked to elicit a negative reply: "God did not reject His people, did He?" This is reinforced by Paul's characteristic negative answer, *me genoito*: By no means!

(Tribe of Benjamin. So was another Saul, the king.) Paul presents himself as his first proof. Philippians 3:5: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee.

If God could save Paul (Acts 9; 22; 26), He certainly could save other Jews (1 Tim. 1:15-16).⁵

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

I said at the end of chapter 10 that the large unanswered question was left lingering. But it only has the feel of lingering because of the eventual inclusions of chapter and verse markers, since the opening words of chapter 11 ask the \$64,000 question: "In that case, I say, isn't it that God has repudiated His people?" The KJV asks the question this way: "I say then, hath God cast away His people?" And in the much more widespread manner it is translated in such Bibles as the RSV and the NIV: "I say then, has God not rejected His people?" I have no bone to pick with any of these translations because they all put across the same sentiment, which is: it is unfathomable to imagine that because Israel has had a long history of rebelliousness that God didn't finally, once and for all, walk away from them and move His election to someone else. The good rabbi, Paul, says to this suggestion: "Heaven forbid". I'll reword this so that there can be no mistake: Paul says that God did NOT reject His people.

Proof of this fact is that Paul himself is an Israelite who is a seed of Abraham; specifically, his heritage is from the tribe of Benjamin. In the sense Paul is using the term "seed of Abraham" it has a double (a *Remez*) meaning. That is, it has the plain sense meaning and a deeper meaning. On one level it is to say that he is the spiritual seed of Abraham who is representative of the covenant promise of salvation. On another level it is to make the point that he is a flesh and blood Hebrew; he is not a converted gentile (that is, his ancestry is not of a gentile family who at some point in the past joined Israel). He is an actual blood descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore, Paul is living proof that God has not cast off His people. He is a hereditary member of Israel, but he is also part of the "true" Israel (true Israel is the spiritual seed). Thus, since Christ certainly would not have chosen a cast-off and divinely rejected Jew (a rejected physical seed) to be His special envoy to the gentile world, this is tangible proof that Israel has not been cast off as God's chosen people.

Perhaps the most perplexing tradition in the history of Christianity to try and understand is why the majority of the Church sincerely believes that God has rejected Israel as His chosen people and replaced them with gentile Christians. From a biblical standpoint Israel is the focus of God's plan of redemption, Old and New Testaments, therefore such a view cannot be supported because just the opposite is stated time and again in no uncertain language. Thus, the source of the dysfunction defaults to manmade Christian doctrines, agenda-driven Theology, political considerations, and a healthy helping of anti-Jewish bigotry.

Bigotry and hate is always wrong no matter who it is directed at. Bigotry is sinful because it violates God's fundamental commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. However, to

⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

harbor a prejudice and even hatred towards the Jewish people bears a far greater consequence, temporally and eternally, because God has set this particular people apart from all others in the history of the world as specially loved and protected by Him. Warning after warning God issues to gentiles for treating His people badly; and for trying to take from them what He has given them as a permanent inheritance. Over the centuries that “taking” usually manifested itself in the seizing of Israel’s land. But an even worse thievery is when gentile Christians attempt to take the Jew’s spiritual heritage away from them; and that is precisely what Replacement Theology (Supersessionism) does.

I’ve spoken to countless Christian lay people and pastors about Replacement Theology and interestingly I don’t think I’ve ever had anyone own up to it. Many will readily explain that Jews killed Christ, or that the Jews rejected Jesus, so God rejected them. That is usually followed up by explaining that the reason the Old Testament is no longer relevant is because it concerns Israel, and Israel is God’s people of the past; the New Testament elects the Church and thus God’s new people of the present and future. Bottom line: Christians don’t hate Israel, but Israel has lost their place in salvation history, are worthy of scorn and suspicion, and God has turned His special favor to gentile Christians in this era. Among some, Israel has also lost its right to the Promised Land.

Anyone hearing this that holds such a worldview needs to listen very carefully to Romans 11; and I hope it leads to repentance. But let me be clear; the entire New Testament supports Israel as God’s continuing chosen people. So even if Romans 11 didn’t exist, any bigotry against the Jewish people or any notion that election as God’s own has been transferred to some other people is still refuted within the various books of the New Testament. What makes Romans 11 so important for Judeo-Christianity is that Paul sums up and explains the how and why of God’s plan of redemption, which uses the Jews as mightily in their disobedience as He does in their obedience. Thus, the overriding message of the Book of Romans (at least up through chapter 11) is stated forcefully and without ambiguity in verse 2: God has not repudiated his people, whom he chose in advance. Our proper understanding of this principle of Israel’s central role in salvation history is crucial to our faith, and crucial to our personal destiny on two levels. First; because God continues to keep Israel and the Jewish people as His set-apart people and land, if we (as Believers) set ourselves against them, we set ourselves into direction confrontation with the God of Israel (and it is unthinkable that a Christian would do such a thing). And second, if the Lord’s character is that He can categorically deny numerous times that He would ever cast aside His people Israel, but do it anyway, then as Christians all of our hope and security just went down the drain along with the Jews’. It means that we can trust Christ for the moment; but clearly God can change His mind and pull the rug of salvation from under us at any time in the future. Why wouldn’t He? According to Christianity He’s done it before; what prevents Him from doing it again? Fortunately, none of this is the case; such a slanderous contention is but the result of wrong-minded Christian dogma and gentile bigotry against Jews. Somehow or another Paul saw this coming and tried to warn the gentiles involved to stop and think; and to exam their motives and rationale.

While in a few minutes we’ll back up to the beginning of this chapter I want you to take special notice of verse 11 because it explains the “why?” behind God allowing the Jews to stumble over the Rock, Yeshua (the “why?” of what God chooses to do is only rarely addressed in the Bible). It was by means of the Jews stumbling that the gentiles were delivered (saved). Ironically, however, the “why?” for delivering the gentiles was to provoke Israel to jealousy so that THEY would be saved! So, the entire endeavor is rather circular; it starts out as for Israel’s

benefit, and when Israel shunned it, God used another people who would benefit, but also who would bring the benefit of a saving righteousness in Messiah right to back to Israel and thus achieve God's goal of saving all Israel.

As I was contemplating this mind-numbing reality and its many facets, one thing kept eating at me: the connection between Christians and making Jews jealous escapes me. What, exactly, have Christians done over the centuries since Paul wrote this letter that would make the Jews jealous of us or our faith? What would make Christianity an attractive choice for Jews? Recently I stumbled across something that David Stern wrote in his New Testament Commentary that addressed this exact issue. It is as close to a rant as it is to a level-headed examination of the issue, but it struck a chord deep within me and so I want to share parts of it with you because I cannot possibly match the eloquence or the passion since David Stern is himself a Messianic Jew; a Jew who has (against all odds) accepted his Messiah. I will be quoting so as not to do violence to what he has to say.

“Is there anything about Gentile Christians that would make non-Messianic Jews jealous of them? Throughout most of the last 2,000 years, the Church, to its great shame, not only has not provoked the Jews to jealousy but has engendered repugnance and fear; so that the Jewish people, instead of being drawn to love their Jewish Messiah Yeshua, have usually come to hate or ignore him, remaining convinced that their non-Messianic Judaism or secularism or agnosticism is superior to Christianity”.

“If this seems a harsh judgment, then let us hear of which Christians, Jews are expected to be jealous. Of the Christians who trapped Jews in their synagogues and burned them alive....? Of the Christians who forced Jews to hear conversionary sermons against their will and expelled from the country those who did not respond....? Of the Christians who invented the blood libel that Jews murder a Christian child and use his blood in their Passover matzah? Of the Christians who remained silent while 6,000,000 Jews perished in the Holocaust? Of Christians that support Palestinian organizations whose terrorists kill and maim Israeli-Jewish children? Of Greek Orthodox Archbishop Capucci, convicted of gunrunning for those same Palestinian terrorist organizations?”

“But the Church's shame is not only in not having taken a stand consistently repudiating every one of these and other horrors committed against the Jews, but in having actually authorized and encouraged some of them. There is no way of silencing every individual who misuses the name of Messiah, falsely claiming His authority for their evil deeds. But there is a way for a community to withdraw its approval and fellowship from such people and condemn them publicly; instead, through much of its history, the Church did exactly the opposite. Of this Jews are to be jealous?”

“Nevertheless, there is another side. The point is not to cite merciful deeds done for the Jews in Christ's name, to “balance the ledger”; that is no consolation at all. Rather, it is that Gentile Christians should understand (Paul's) words to PROVOKE THEM TO JEALOUSY, as a command...or at least as a challenge. Non-Messianic Jews ought to be able to look at saved Gentiles in the Church and see in them such a wonderful change from their former selves, such holy lives, such dignified, godly, peaceful, peace-bringing, honorable, ethical, joyful and humble people, that they become jealous and want for themselves too whatever it is that makes these Gentiles different and special.”

Dr. Stern said much more, but I think this captures the essence and intent quite well. Handing Jews, a Christian tract is not peace-loving nor does it make them jealous. Treating Israel and their enemies even-handedly does not make them jealous for Christ. This highlights the great

importance of us (whom the Holy Spirit has graciously given the truth and an unexplainable love and concern for the Jewish people) standing up against wrong doctrine in the Church especially as it concerns Israel and Jews. Sadly, there are many hearing my voice that has, because of the many wrongs done by the Church that Dr. Stern spoke of, given up calling themselves Christians because of what that name has come to represent. They have in no way given up on Christ; only the organizations that purport to speak for Him and in so doing do great harm to the true Body of Messiah and to God's purpose to save all Israel.

So, what should we do? Folks, silence is the great enemy. It is one thing to be silent, as was Yeshua, when we are being personally persecuted or wronged; it is quite another to be silent at the pain and injustice being done to others. And while it is impossible to speak or act against all injustice and pain in this world because the expanse of it is overwhelming, we can stand up to what is happening before our very eyes; that which is in our own backyards and that which God says to pay special attention. What happens in our own backyards varies greatly community by community; but that which God says to pay special attention does not. We are to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and we are to stand with Israel and its people because we are commanded to do so. They are, and remain, God's people. But we are not only to stand with, but also to stand against. We are to stand against those who support Israel's enemies even if they sincerely believe they are doing the Christian thing when they do so.

One of the best examples of this in our day is the Christ at the Checkpoint ministry in Israel. It is a pro-Palestinian, anti-Zionist, Christian ministry supported by some of America's best known pastors; chief among these the highly regarded John Piper of the Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis. God gives me no choice but to stand against the charter of Christ at the Checkpoint, and against Piper's agenda and the agendas of all those who identify with this ministry that dares to misuse Christ's name in order to defame, slander, and harm Yeshua's own people for the sake of a politically correct, human concept of fairness and mercy for Israel's enemies! At the foundation of this ministry is a common belief that God is done with Israel and that the Church is God's new chosen people. And since Palestinians are gentiles, some Christians, they have at least as much right to the land of Israel as the Jews!⁶

McGee: What people is Paul talking about? Israel. In case the amillennialist might miss this, Paul is very specific. Paul himself is present proof. He is a true Israelite of genuine stock. He is descended from Abraham; he is from one of the twelve tribes of Israel, Benjamin, one of the two tribes that never seceded from the nation. He was 100 percent Israelite.

"God forbid" is more accurately, Let it not be! It is a strong negative. Even the form of the question demands a negative answer. God has not cast away Israel as a nation.⁷

BKC: 11:1-6. Paul's transition from chapter 10 is seen in the repetition of his rhetorical clause "I ask" (10:18-19). I ask then is literally, "Therefore, I say." The apostle's question is, Did God reject His people? In Greek the question is asked to elicit a negative reply: "God did not reject His people, did He?" This is reinforced by Paul's characteristic negative ejaculation, By no means! (*mē genoito*; cf. comments on 3:4) Then Paul presented himself as his first proof. He had responded by faith to Jesus Christ and had received God's provided righteousness, and yet he was an Israelite (cf. Phil. 3:5) and of the tribe of Benjamin. Though small, Benjamin was a significant tribe (Saul, Israel's first king, was from Benjamin). If God could save Paul (Acts 9;

⁶ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

22; 26), He certainly could save other Jews (1 Tim. 1:15-16). Then he positively declared, God did not reject His people (quoted from 1 Sam. 12:22; Ps. 94:14), whom He foreknew (proegnō, "had a meaningful relationship with"; cf. Amos 3:2; and cf. comments on Rom. 8:29). God had chosen Israel as His covenant people from eternity past and entered into a relationship with them that will never be destroyed (cf. Jer. 31:37).

Paul's second proof that God has not rejected His people was taken from Israel's history during Elijah's ministry. The prophet was deeply depressed, having fled for his life from Jezebel. Paul said, Elijah... appealed to (*entynchanei*, "petitioned"; trans. "intercedes" in Rom. 8:27 and "is... interceding" in 8:34) God against Israel. Paul then quoted part of the prophet's complaint (1 Kings 19:10, 14), reversing the order of the details quoted and concluding with Elijah's lament, I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me. Elijah considered himself the only believing person left in Israel. Paul asked, And what was God's answer (lit., "the divine response") to him? God was not limited to one fearful, depressed prophet; He had reserved for Himself a godly remnant in Israel that numbered 7,000 (1 Kings 19:18). The preservation of the faithful remnant was a work of God.

After the historical illustration Paul drew a conclusion for his day: So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace (lit., "a remnant according to the election of grace has come to be"). Paul was only one of many in his generation elected to faith from the people of Israel. In every generation of the church "a remnant chosen by grace" has been called from among the Jews. Paul added that this choice is totally by God's grace (cf. Eph. 2:8-9) and he emphasized the antithesis between grace and works (cf. Rom. 4:4-5; 9:30-32).⁸

Guzik: Israel and the remnant of grace.

(Rom 11:1a) Has God cast away (rejected) His people Israel?

I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not!

Has God cast away His people? Paul's question makes sense at this point in Romans. If Israel's rejection of the gospel was somehow both consistent with God's eternal plan (Romans 9:1-29) and Israel's own choosing (Romans 9:30-10:21), then does this mean that Israel's fate is settled, and there is no possibility of restoration?

Certainly not! Despite their present state, Israel is not permanently cast away. Now Paul will explain this answer.

(Rom 11:1b) Evidence that God has not cast away His people: Paul himself.

For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

I also am an Israelite: Paul's faith in Jesus as the Messiah proved there were some Jews chosen by God who embraced the gospel.

I also: Whenever we want evidence of God's work, we could and should look to our own life first. This is what Paul did and what we should do.⁹

ESV: The majority of Israel failed to believe. Does this mean that God has rejected his people? Paul presents himself as an example of the remnant that has been preserved, a remnant that indicates that God is not finished with Israel and that he will fulfill the promises made to his people.¹⁰

⁸ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

¹⁰ ESV Study Bible Notes

FCsBN: Has God rejected Israel? The word “reject” (Greek *apostato*) has a range of meanings. On the one hand, it can mean “reject” or “repudiate.” On the other hand, it can mean “push back,” implying a lack of permanence. In either case, the “rejection” of God has limits. Without spelling out the specifics, according to Paul, God is not finished with Israel, or at the very least with a remnant of Israel (see vv. 5–6). Paul’s claim that God has not rejected Israel in any final way was historically ignored by the early church, which claimed that God had in fact rejected Israel and their practices in favor of the Gentile church. In the Letter to Diognetus, the author wrote: “As for Jewish taboos with respect to food, along with their superstition about the Sabbath, their bragging about circumcision, and their hypocrisy about fast days and new moons, I hardly think that you need to be told by me that all these things are ridiculous . . . Christians are right in holding themselves aloof from the aimlessness and trickery of Greeks and Jews alike, and from the officiousness and noisy conceit of the Jews.” It’s hard to imagine Paul would have agreed with this early Christian document.¹¹

CJSB: 1–32 “God has repudiated his people? Heaven forbid!” Despite the claims of some, Jewish “disobedience” (v. 30) does not annul God’s promises to Isra’el, because “God’s free gifts and his calling are irrevocable” (v. 29). Here Sha’ul cautions Gentile believers in Yeshua against anti-Semitism and false pride (vv. 13–26), while encouraging them in their active role in attracting the Jewish people to Yeshua (vv. 30–36).¹²

²God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

Missler: Quoted from 1 Sam. 12:22; Ps. 94:14.

‘whom He foreknew’: *proginosko*, to have knowledge beforehand; “had a meaningful relationship with.”

(Stiffler points out: Israel is the only nation He foreknew;)

God had chosen Israel as His covenant people from eternity past and entered into a relationship with them that will never be destroyed.

Amos 3:2: You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities.

Jer 31:37: Thus, saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.

Paul’s second proof that God has not rejected His people was taken from Israel’s history during Elijah’s ministry. The prophet was deeply depressed, having fled for his life from Jezebel.¹³

¹¹ First-Century Study Bible Notes

¹² Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

¹³ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

The core subject of this ongoing debate between Paul and his straw man is crucial for our theology and it affects Believers in the most profound and practical way. Because if God has indeed rejected His people, Israel, due to their unfaithfulness, then God has broken His promises to them. The consequences of God doing such a thing are so far-reaching that they are almost too dreadful to contemplate. Let's look at a few places in the Bible where God promised Israel that such a thing as Him breaking His promises to them would never happen.

CJB 1 Samuel 12:22 For the sake of his great reputation, ADONAI will not abandon his people; because it has pleased ADONAI to make you a people for himself.

CJB Psalm 94:14 For ADONAI will not desert his people, he will not abandon his heritage.

Jeremiah 33:23-26 CJB 23 This word of ADONAI came to Yirmeyahu: 24 "Haven't you noticed that these people are saying, 'ADONAI has rejected the two families he chose'? Hence they despise my people and no longer look at them as a nation. 25 Here is what ADONAI says: 'If I have not established my covenant with day and night and fixed the laws for sky and earth, 26 then I will also reject the descendants of Ya'akov and of my servant David, not choosing from his descendants' people to rule over the descendants of Avraham, Yis'chak and Ya'akov. For I will cause their captives to come back, and I will show them compassion.'"

I will again make the argument that I think Paul would have made had he envisioned a day in the future when the bulk of the Christian world would enthusiastically and naively declare that the Torah and the Law of Moses are abolished, and the Jewish people are abandoned as God's chosen right along with the Old Testament. To put it another way: that God has taken away the covenants He made with the Hebrews and transferred them to gentiles. The argument I make is this: if God would make what seems to be an ironclad, unconditional promise to the Hebrews over the ages....one He repeats time and again.... that He will NEVER forsake His people; will NEVER abandon His heritage, Israel; and then suddenly He does..... then why would gentile Christians feel confident and secure that God would not find a reason to abandon us despite His many promises? Remember what Paul said back in Romans chapter 8?

Romans 8:35-39 CJB 35 Who will separate us from the love of the Messiah? Trouble? Hardship? Persecution? Hunger? Poverty? Danger? War? 36 As the Tanakh puts it, "For your sake we are being put to death all day long, we are considered sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are superconquerors, through the one who has loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers, neither what exists nor what is coming, 39 neither powers above nor powers below, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God which comes to us through the Messiah Yeshua, our Lord.

Before quoting this NT passage I quoted to you very similar Old Testament promises to Israel that much of the Church says God has backed away from. So why should we rely so heavily, and sleep peacefully, based on what Paul said in Romans 8? Can we be so arrogant as to believe that gentile Christians are better people and perhaps have more merit than the Israelites had? Or that God's promise to gentiles is somehow more secure than His promise to Israel? Or that we could never be as rebellious or unfaithful as His "former" chosen? Or that we will have our salvation judged as a group of people and not as individuals? What do I say that? Because as Christians are fond to assert as a foundational doctrine, God rejected the Jews as an entire group because the Jews (as an entire group) rejected their Messiah. And yet the Bible is clear that not all Jews as a group rejected Yeshua. We read in Acts of thousands upon thousands of Jews being the very first to accept the salvation offered by Christ. So, if we are going to assume that God accepts or

rejects people for salvation based upon the majority action of the entire group that we belong to, then gentiles (as a group) are in a very precarious position because certainly not all gentiles have accepted Christ, have they? In fact, throughout history the vast majority of gentiles have rejected the Messiah. So, what makes gentiles (as a group) any less liable to being rejected by God than the Jews if the standard is that however the majority of the group chooses to deal with Christ will decide the eternal fate of all?

Thanks be to God we can be confident of our salvation because God did NOT renege on His promise to His original elect, Israel, nor did He create a new and different elect, the gentile Church. And we can be certain that the opportunity for salvation is not offered or held back according to what group we belong to (Jews or gentiles) or how others within our group might choose.

I want to inject something here that while it might sound trivial (perhaps even a bit confusing), it is most important for us as worshippers of Yeshua to understand and to combat, and it is especially so for us living in this age when Messiah's return seems to be so near. When speaking of Believers in Christ as opposed to followers of Judaism, the usual terminology is Christians on the one side and Jews on the other. And yet, many Jews are Believers in Christ. Often, I'll hear informed Believers say: the Bible says that Jews were the first Christians. And yet, since the 2nd century A.D., the term Jewish Christian is seen an oxymoron. That is, Jewishness and Christianity are no longer seen as compatible within the same person; it would be like calling someone a Muslim Christian. Thus, even though we don't realize it, subconsciously what we MEAN and what we mentally picture when we use the terms Christians and Jews is a group of gentiles who follow Christ versus the Jewish people in general. It is just further proof that despite many Christians denying it, Christianity is indeed seen in the eyes of the Church itself, and most definitely of Jews and other religions of the world, as a religion of, by, and for gentiles. And thus should a Jewish person want to follow Christ (they want to be a "Christian") then quite naturally they have to give up their Jewishness and identify more as gentiles.....since Christ followers (Christians) are seen by most of the world as gentiles. Nothing has done more to help keep Jews from accepting their Messiah than this perception.

You see, the natural opposite of Jews is NOT Christians; it is gentiles. The term Jews doesn't necessarily indicate a devotion to the religion of Judaism anymore than the term gentiles indicate a devotion to the religion of Christianity; and it never has. It is only because of the slanderous Church doctrine created by some of the early Church Fathers (all gentiles of course) that God has rejected and abandoned Israel (the Jews) and instead has elected and embraced Christians (gentiles according to the Church) that this divisive mindset even exists. It is a wrong mindset that Paul has been concerned about and is fighting against it as false theology; trying to nip it in the bud before it could take root. Paul would be aghast if he was suddenly resurrected and plopped down into the 21st century and saw it in action; he'd probably take it as a personal failure.

The entire Book of Romans has Paul refuting a division of Jews from Christians, and a division between Jewish Believers and gentile Believers. And now as we study Romans Chapter 11, Paul is going to great lengths to help us understand what God's view is of Jews and gentiles as regards redemption, and especially of those from among those two groups who, by faith, have chosen to put their trust in Messiah Yeshua. It is ironic that for centuries Christianity has pictured a Jew who accepts Christ as one who naturally jumps from being a Jew to being a gentile. In fact, the infamous Spanish Inquisition sought to ferret out those Jews who had not made that required jump. But now in modern times a new false doctrine has arisen; some among

the Jewish Roots movement picture a gentile who accepts Christ as one who of course jumps from being a gentile to being a Jew. However, such a position is not biblically sound as Paul says over and over again: in Christ, there is no difference between Jew and gentile. But, because we are all human beings, when a gentile Christian hears Paul say that, he or she thinks: "Good; now that Jew is going to be more like us gentiles!" But when a Jewish Believer hears Paul say it, he or she thinks: "Good; now that gentile is going to be more like us Jews!"

So, as we continue in Romans 11, think hard about the English terms that are used, what they mean to your mind, and then do your best to shut down those mental filters that cause us to make assumptions that aren't true and conjure up mental pictures that give us false impressions of biblical intent and reality. In many cases Paul is not so much trying to give us new information; he is trying to get us to unlearn wrong assumptions and doctrine in order to relearn right doctrine. However as is evident in Paul's missionary journeys, unlearning is a much harder thing for people to do and many can be passionately resistant to it. Unlearning also requires much explanation, definition of terms, and patience. So, as we go through Romans 11, much explanation will be presented to you. We have much unlearning yet ahead of us. So be open and be patient. God has a lot to teach us in this chapter.

Now that we've discussed the seriousness of what is at stake in our understanding of the place of Israel in modern times, let's return to the top of chapter 11. Paul, in verse 2, leans on the Prophet Elijah to help him prove his point that God did not reject Israel due to their unfaithfulness to Him. Paul picks a passage from 1Kings 19 that speaks of a time when Elijah was on the run from wicked Queen Jezebel. This happens after the Mt. Carmel incident when Elijah had a confrontation with the Ba'al worshippers and many of the Ba'al worshippers (who were loyal to Jezebel) were killed. He fled all the way to Horev, the mountain of God...the same mountain where Moses had the Burning Bush experience. In reality, however, he was running from God and the mission that God had given to him as His Prophet. Not surprisingly God finds him and Elijah proceeds to complain how unfaithful and rebellious the Israelites are; so rebellious that they now want to kill Elijah. But God counters that despite the bulk of Israel being unfaithful He has kept for Himself several thousand loyal worshippers. Let's read some of the passage Paul is using.

1Kings 19:8-10 CJB 8 He got up, ate and drank, and, on the strength of that meal, traveled forty days and nights until he reached Horev the mountain of God. 9 There he went into a cave and spent the night. Then the word of ADONAI came to him; he said to him, "What are you doing here, Eliyahu?" 10 He answered, "I have been very zealous for ADONAI the God of armies, because the people of Isra'el have abandoned your covenant, broken down your altars and killed your prophets with the sword. Now I'm the only one left, and they're coming after me to kill me too."

1Kings 19:13-14 CJB 13 When Eliyahu heard it, he covered his face with his cloak, stepped out and stood at the entrance to the cave. Then a voice came to him and said, "What are you doing here, Eliyahu?" 14 He answered, "I have been very zealous for ADONAI the God of armies; because the people of Isra'el have abandoned your covenant, broken down your altars and killed your prophets with the sword. Now I'm the only one left, and they're after me to kill me too."

1Kings 19:18 CJB 18 Still, I will spare seven thousand in Isra'el, every knee that hasn't bent down before Ba'al and every mouth that has not kissed him."

McGee 2-3: Paul uses old Elijah as an illustration, and he makes a good one. Elijah stood for God, and he stood alone. How I admire that man standing alone for God against 450 prophets of Baal. And Elijah goes to the Lord to complain. He says, "Lord, I am all alone; I am the only one left." God says, "Wait a minute, you think you are alone, but you are not."¹⁴

Guzik: God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew... at this present time there is a remnant: In Paul's day Israel as a group generally rejected their Messiah. Yet a substantial remnant embraces the gospel of Jesus Christ, and God has often worked in Israel through a faithful remnant (as He did in the time of Elijah).

"It is just possible that Paul, likewise persecuted by his own countrymen, felt a special kinship with Elijah." (Harrison)

He pleads with God against Israel: Things were so bad that Elijah prayed against his own people!¹⁵

³Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

Missler: Paul then quoted part of the prophet's complaint (1 Kings 19:10, 14), reversing the order of the details quoted and concluding with Elijah's lament: Elijah considered himself the only believing person left in Israel.¹⁶

Guzik: Lord, they have killed Your prophets: Elijah thought that God had cast off the nation and he was the only one left serving the Lord. But God showed him that there was in fact a substantial remnant – though it was only a remnant, it was actually there.¹⁷

ESV: 3–5 Elijah in his despair thought Israel would be extinguished. But God assured Elijah that he had preserved a remnant, which gave Elijah hope that God would fulfill his saving promises in the future. In Paul's day, as in Elijah's day (v. 4) and today, a remnant of Jews believe in Christ because of God's electing grace (cf. 9:27–29).¹⁸

⁴But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of Baal*.

Missler: God was not limited to one fearful, depressed prophet; He had reserved for Himself a godly remnant in Israel that numbered 7,000 (1 Kings 19:18).

The preservation of the faithful remnant was a work of God.¹⁹

¹⁴ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁵ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

¹⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹⁷ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

¹⁸ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹⁹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Paul's words are not an exact quote from this passage in 1 Kings, but it is close enough that we know where it came from. The point of it is that Elijah had pretty well decided that he was the only person faithful to God left in Israel; but God responds by saying that He is going to maintain a remnant of Israel who remains properly loyal to Him. When God speaks of 7,000 as the size of the remnant clearly this is a round number and the number 7 is meant as symbolic of being complete and perfect. In the Bible when a multiplier like ten, or a hundred, or a thousand is added to the number 7 it means that God is indicating something of divine influence and importance. Here it means that despite the defection of most of Israel to the pagan worship sponsored by Queen Jezebel, God still has a substantial number of Israelites who remain faithful to Him. The bottom line for Paul is that, yes, as the straw man alleges, Israel has been unfaithful to God (especially by rejecting the Messiah). But just as with Elijah that doesn't mean God is rejecting His chosen nation as a result. God doesn't base His decisions upon the actions of humans; He bases it on His own sovereign will and grace. In fact, the maintaining of a remnant is a sort of sign of God's continuing faithfulness to Israel. Thus, the remnant of faithful from out of Israel that God saved for Himself during the time of Elijah is to be compared to the remnant of Christ Believers that God has saved for Himself from among Israel of 60 A.D. The number 7,000 is not to indicate that 7,000 is an exact number or even an approximation. It is an open number; a representative number. The actual number of those who bow down before Messiah Yeshua will be the result not of human merit but rather of God's mercy and grace.

McGee: Elijah was totally unaware that God had been working in the hearts of seven thousand men. If there were seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal, then it follows that there were about twice as many women who did not bow the knee either, if you go by percentages. For the northern kingdom this was a sizable remnant in the day of Ahab and Jezebel.²⁰

⁵Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

Missler: Always going to be a "remnant." Paul was only one of many in his generation elected to faith from the people of Israel. In every generation of the church "a remnant chosen by grace" has been called from among the Jews.²¹

McGee: God always had a remnant in Israel. That remnant today is composed of those Jews who have come to Christ. This is the reason Paul will say later that all Israel is not Israel.²²

Guzik: At this present time there is a remnant: We often think that God needs a lot of people to do a great work, but He often works through a small group, or through a group that starts out small. Though not many Jews in Paul's day embraced Jesus as Messiah, a remnant did and God will use that small group in a big way.

²⁰ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

²¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

²² Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

“It was not the number as much as the permanence of God’s plan for Israel that mattered in the time of Elijah... He put his trust in God’s grace, not in numbers.” (Morris)²³

6And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

Missler: Paul added that this choice is totally by God’s grace (cf. Eph. 2:8-9) and he emphasized the antithesis between grace and works (cf. Rom. 4:4-5; 9:30-32).²⁴

McGee: In other words, grace and works represent two mutually exclusive systems. They are diametrically opposed to each other. The remnant at this time is composed of those who are not saved by works or by merit; they are saved by the grace of God. The future purpose of God -- from the day Paul wrote down to the present -- concerns those who will accept Christ. What about those who do not accept Christ? Well, the remainder of Israel is hardened.²⁵

Guzik; If by grace, then it is no longer of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace: Paul left the previous verse noting that the remnant was chosen according to the election of grace. Now he reminds us what grace is by definition: the free gift of God, not given with an eye to performance or potential in the one receiving but given only out of kindness in the giver.

If it is of works, it is no longer grace: As principles, grace and works don’t go together. If giving is of grace, it cannot be of works, and if it is of works, it cannot be of grace.²⁶

ESV: Election and grace are inseparable, for both show that salvation is God's work alone, and that it has nothing to do with works. On grace, see also 4:4–5; Acts 15:11; Eph. 2:8–9.²⁷

7What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded

Missler: Romans 10:1-4... Sincere, but sincerely wrong.

Notice the irony. The Jews zealously sought to be accepted by God on the basis of works and the righteousness of the Law (cf. 10:2-3). However, they were not accepted by God; only the elect were, because of God’s sovereign choice by grace.

The others were hardened (cf. 11:25).²⁸

²³ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

²⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

²⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

²⁶ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

²⁷ ESV Study Bible Notes

²⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Therefore, since it is not merit but grace that determines who is and who is not a true seed of Abraham, then self-effort plays no role in who is chosen and who is not. Interestingly we see Paul try to weave his complex and challenging teaching together by essentially using the same question in verse 7 that he asked back in Romans 9:30. In 9:30 & 31 it was: 30 So, what are we to say? This: that Gentiles, even though they were not striving for righteousness, have obtained righteousness; but it is a righteousness grounded in trusting! 31 However, Isra'el, even though they kept pursuing a Torah that offers righteousness, did not reach what the Torah offers.

Here in verse 7 Paul turns the question into a statement: 7 What follows is that Isra'el has not attained the goal for which she is striving. The ones chosen have obtained it, but the rest have been made stonelike....

What we can't get around is that once again we have this mysterious paradigm appear, which declares that those who don't decide for Christ do so because on the one hand, because of their own decisions, they have missed the goal of the Law of Moses (to obtain a righteousness based on trust); but on the other hand God caused a divine hardening to occur in them. Once again the principles of free will and predestination collide because they seemingly are opposites and it feels as though we must decide on which one we accept, and which one we reject, as proper doctrine. I will comment just briefly that this rather standard Christian characterization of free will set in opposition to predestination is an error. I think to turn this issue into a debate over whether it is either human free will or divine predestination that determines human decisions and outcomes is akin to the analogy I drew a few lessons ago that asks us to choose which is more important and impactful to life: food to eat or air to breathe. The reality is that life cannot be sustained without both; each has their critical role to play. And depending on the situation, one may play a more dominant role than the other for a time; yet in the end both are indispensable as both food and air have definite impacts on life (usually simultaneously). In the end the Bible shows us that the human experience is a joint venture between God's predestination and man's free will; it is not an either/or proposition. Where the line is drawn between the two I do not know; and how much influence one has at any given time over the other varies. We do not have to choose between predestination and free will; we just have to be aware of the existence of both and that we have control over one, but not the other.

If this concept bothers you a bit, then good; you were paying attention. Evangelical Christianity as it exists in modern times is the result of Western cultural influence that values democracy and individuality above all else. So it can seem unfair to Westerners that God could offer us a choice and then harden us such that our choice is essentially channeled towards sin, and therefore we fail; and then at some point we pay a penalty for it. In other words, in a certain sense choice can be seen as somewhat of an illusion. But there is good news in all this: however the hardening occurred, even for the hardened that is not God's final word on the matter. Change and redemption are still possible. Why is that? Because whether we are part of the chosen, or part of the hardened, we all come from a place of meriting eternal death. We all come from the same point of sin and need.

CSB Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

The chosen were not better people, or less sinful, than the hardened. The only way out of this dilemma for anyone is God's grace; no action or attempt at "balancing the ledger" on our part matters. God doesn't grade on a curve so His grace is available to all; from the worst of us to the

best. But the other side of this coin is that since Paul is specifically talking about the Jewish people at this time (the chosen versus the hardened), then we must come to grips with the reality that it is because of the hardened Jews that salvation was even offered to the pagan gentiles. The undeniable inference all throughout Romans is that if (hypothetically) the majority of Jews had accepted Christ instead of rejecting Him, then under what circumstances or when or even if salvation would come to gentiles would have been a very different scenario. So Christians even owe the Jews who refused to accept Messiah a debt of gratitude; it is because of their being hardened that God turned to the gentiles in the first place.

I know that what I just told you about what Paul just said may be pretty hard to swallow. Paul was quite aware of how difficult a concept he has asked the Jewish people (and us) to accept (after all, he too is a Jew) so he of course backs it up with Holy Scripture. And before we read each Scripture passage I want you to notice something. The Jews structure the Bible (the Tanakh) as consisting of 3 sections: the Torah, the Writings, and the Prophets. So it is not by accident that Paul chooses Scripture passages from each one of these 3 sections to prove his case. The first passage is verse 8, and the first part of verse 8 is from the Prophets (Isaiah 29) while the second part of verse 8 is from the Torah (Deuteronomy 29). The second passage is verse 9 and it is from the Writings (Psalm 69). As has been our custom, let's look at those passages as written in the Old Testament.

Isaiah 29:1-11 CJB 1 Woe to Ari'el [fireplace on God's altar, lion of God]- Ari'el, the city where David encamped! Celebrate the feasts for a few more years, 2 but then I will bring trouble to Ari'el. There will be mourning and moaning, as she becomes truly an ari'el for me. 3 I will encamp all around you, besiege you with towers and mount siege-works against you. 4 Prostrate, you will speak from the ground; your words will be stifled by the dust; your voice will sound like a ghost in the ground, your words like squeaks in the dust. 5 But your many foes will become like fine powder, the horde of tyrants like blowing chaff, and it will happen very suddenly. 6 You will be visited by ADONAI-Tzva'ot with thunder, earthquakes and loud noises, whirlwinds, tempests, flaming firestorms. 7 Then, all the nations fighting Ari'el, every one at war with her, the ramparts around her, the people that trouble her will fade like a dream, like a vision in the night. 8 It will be like a hungry man dreaming he's eating; but when he wakes up, his stomach is empty; or like a thirsty man dreaming he's drinking; but when he wakes up, he is dry and exhausted- it will be like this for the horde of all nations fighting against Mount Tziyon. 9 If you make yourselves stupid, you will stay stupid! If you blind yourselves, you will stay blind! You are drunk, but not from wine; you are staggering, but not from strong liquor. 10 For ADONAI has poured over you a spirit of lethargy; he has closed your eyes (that is, the prophets) and covered your heads (that is, the seers). 11 For you this whole prophetic vision has become like the message in a sealed-up scroll. When one gives it to someone who can read and says, "Please read this," he answers, "I can't, because it's sealed."

The idea is that what has happened to Israel in not recognizing their Messiah is due to them becoming spiritually insensitive. God has sent His Prophets to tell Israel how to recognize their Messiah, yet God has also given Israel a spirit of spiritual lethargy because of their unfaithfulness. So even though Messiah is right there before their eyes in the Scriptures, they can't see it; they have been blinded to it. Notice that Israel's failure and inability to recognize their Messiah even from the prophecies of their own Prophets and Seers is caused by two things: 1) their own free will in their disobedience, and 2) God's divine hardening of them by sending them a spiritual stupor that won't allow them to see the truth even if they want to. So here we have that mysterious paradigm show up again, this time in Isaiah: human free will versus God's

divine intervention that causes us to not be able to choose wisely. And as we see here in Isaiah 29, both causes were involved in Israel becoming blind to God's purposes and to His Messiah. Deuteronomy 29 is essentially more of the same.

CJB Deuteronomy 29:1 Then Moshe summoned all Isra'el and said to them, "You saw everything ADONAI did before your eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, to all his servants and to all his land; 2 the great testings which you saw with your own eyes, and the signs and those great wonders.

3 Nevertheless, to this day ADONAI has not given you a heart to understand, eyes to see or ears to hear!

So on one hand, by their own free will Israel chose to ignore everything God did for them that they

personally saw and experienced. On the other hand part of the reason that this was so is because God did not give Israel a heart (a mind) to understand or the ability to discern.

McGee: Remainder Of Israel Blinded (11:7-10)

It is important to notice that they were hardened because they failed; they did not fail because they were hardened. A lot of folk get the cart before the horse -- in fact, they get the horse in the cart, and it doesn't belong there!

Did they fail to come to Christ because they had been blinded? Oh, no. They had been exposed to the gospel as no other people have been exposed to it. God said, "All day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom. 10:21). He has been patient with them. Now they are blinded because they would not accept the light He gave them.²⁹

BKC: 11:7-10. Paul then discussed what "a remnant chosen by grace" out of Israel meant for the people as a whole. The situation was ironic. The Jews zealously sought to be accepted by God on the basis of works and the righteousness of the Law (cf. 10:2-3). However, they were not accepted by God; only the elect were, because of God's sovereign choice by grace. The others were hardened (cf. 11:25). What it means to be hardened is seen from Paul's explanatory and supporting quotations. The first is taken from both Deuteronomy 29:3-4 and Isaiah 29:10, and indicates that hardening involves spiritual drowsiness (stupor is the rendering of *katanyxeōs*, "a numbness resulting from a sting"), blindness, and deafness (cf. Isa. 6:9-10). The second quotation (in Rom. 11:9-10) is of Psalm 69:22-23, which predicts that the very things which should have been the source of nourishment and blessing to Israel (table means their blessings from the hand of God, which should have led them to Christ; cf. Gal. 3:24) became the occasion for their rejection of God (a snare and a trap, a stumbling block; cf. Rom. 9:32-33) and God's judgment (retribution) on them. Because they refused to receive God's truth (cf. Isa. 6:9-10; John 5:40) their backs will be bent under the weight of guilt and punishment forever.³⁰

Guzik: ³¹The elect have obtained it, and the rest were hardened: The elect among Israel received and responded to the mercy of God but the rest were hardened by their rejection.

²⁹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³⁰ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

³¹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

ESV: 7–10 The composite citation from Isa. 29:10 and Deut. 29:4 clarifies that God has hardened Israel so that they would not see or hear. Paul then prays for judgment (Ps. 69:22–23) over the Jews of his day who have rejected Christ.³²

CJSB: 7–8 Isra’el has not attained the goal for which she is striving. Sha’ul here says “striving” (in the present tense), not “was striving” (as in most translations, which suggest that Isra’el no longer strives for righteousness). The ones chosen, Messianic Jews, have obtained it through trusting in the atonement God has provided in Yeshua; but the rest have been made “stonelike,” meaning hardened or blinded, presently unable to understand and respond.³³

8(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

Missler: What it means to be hardened is seen from Paul’s explanatory and supporting quotations. The first is taken from both Deuteronomy 29:3-4 and Isaiah 29:10, and indicates that hardening involves spiritual drowsiness (*katanuxis*):

- 1) a pricking, piercing
- 2) severe sorrow, extreme grief
- 3) insensibility or torpor of mind, such as numbness resulting from a sting; blindness, and deafness (cf. Isa 6:9-10).³⁴

McGee: They had rejected, you see. When a man rejects, he becomes the most difficult to reach with the grace of God.³⁵

Guzik: Just as it is written: The quotations from Isaiah 29 and Psalm 69 tell us that God can give a spirit of stupor and eyes that they should not see and He can say let their eyes be darkened as He pleases. If God is pleased to enlighten only a remnant of Israel at the present time, He may do so as He pleases.

Morris calls a spirit of stupor “an attitude of deadness towards spiritual things.”

“The idea is that men are sitting feasting comfortably at their banquet; and their very sense of safety has become their ruin. They are so secure in the fancied safety that the enemy can come upon them unaware” (Barclay). The Jews of Paul’s day were so secure in their idea of being the chosen people that the very idea became the thing that ruined them.³⁶

³² ESV Study Bible Notes

³³ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

³⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

³⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³⁶ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

⁹And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them:

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

And then in verse 9, we have King David speaking from the past in Psalm 69 when he says: "Let their dining table become for them a snare and a trap, a pitfall and a punishment. 10 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they can't see, with their backs bent continually."

For the sake of time we won't go to Psalm 69 and read the surrounding verses, so I'll just fill you in on the important points. First of all, the way Paul has quoted this passage is the way it appears in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible). So once again we have validation that Paul preferred the use of the Greek Bible as opposed to the original Hebrew version. This would make sense since he is operating in the Diaspora, where the most common language (even among Jews) was Greek. The second point is that Psalm 69 is about the oppression King David is under, whereby his enemies within and without are trying every way possible to kill him. He admits that most of this is his fault because he has been sinful, and in fact the mention of the dining table is because (literally) an attempt to assassinate him by poisoning his food happened. So, whoever it was who tried to poison him, David hopes that their own dining table becomes a place of danger, instead of a place of peace and fellowship. The mention of their eyes being darkened means that David hopes that his enemies can't discern, and their backs bent continually means that his enemies might become slaves under forced labor. Paul is interpreting Psalm 69 in the Remez method of interpretation; that is, it means what it says on the one hand, but it also contains a deeper underlying meaning on the other. Christians might call this allegory, but it is not quite the same thing.

The foundational point Paul is making is that those Jews who were hardened and became stonelike in their inability to recognize the true goal and intent of The Torah and the reality of the advent of the Messiah Yeshua, is partly their own doing and partly God's doing. So after making essentially the same point from all 3 sections of the Bible, Paul uses his straw man (his imaginary debate opponent) to frame a question in verse 11 that he figures his readers (mostly Jews since the last few chapters have been aimed directly at them) are bound to be thinking. After all; the scathing indictment Paul has issued against non-Believing Jews (the vast majority of Jews, whether they live in the Holy Land or in the Diaspora) is quite damning. The straw man says: 11 "In that case, I say, isn't it that they have stumbled with the result that they have permanently fallen away?"

Paul has just envisioned his second of two possible outcomes (both bad) for the Jewish non-Believers. The first was in the opening verse of this chapter: CJB Romans 11:1 "In that case, I say, isn't it that God has repudiated his people?" What is being implied here is a direct action of God to reject His people for their lack of faith by rejecting His Son Yeshua. But now in verse 11 (11 "In that case, I say, isn't it that they have stumbled with the result that they have permanently fallen away?") it is NOT God taking action. Rather it is that the people have themselves fallen away from God's mercy as a natural consequence of refusing to accept their Messiah. In both cases Paul gives his typical rabbinic answer: "Heaven forbid". So Paul is saying to his straw man: there is no circumstance that you can think of whereby God's chosen people are rejected and abandoned, even if by all human standards they deserve to be. Mostly this is because God elected them long before they were ever a people, and since the election is in the form of a divine promise, such an election is not revocable for any reason.

McGee: This is a quotation from Psalm 69:22 which says, "Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap." The table has reference to feasting, which is representative of material prosperity. The children of Israel had great feasts at which they were actually guests of God -- they did not invite God to their feasts as the pagans did -- rather, God invited them. The Passover was a notable example. The thought here is that they were feasting in a conceited confidence which was entirely pagan. Their carnal security deceived them as to their true spiritual ruin. They trusted the things they ate without any true confidence in God. My friend, this is the condition at the present moment of multitudes of church members. They come to the Lord's Supper without a spiritual understanding.³⁷

CJSB: 9–10 “Let their dining table become for them a snare and a trap.” “Dining table” refers not to the kosher laws (which, although complicated to the outsider, are hardly sufficiently complex to become a snare and a trap), but to fellowship at meals, which is highly valued in Judaism, especially if “words of Torah” are exchanged.³⁸

¹⁰Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back away.

Missler: Second quotation: Psalm 69:22-23, which predicts that the very things which should have been the source of nourishment and blessing to Israel

“table” = means their blessings from the hand of God, which should have led them to Christ; cf. Gal. 3:24) became the occasion for their rejection of God (“a snare and a trap, a stumbling block;” cf. Rom. 9:32-33) and “recompense” = God’s judgment on them.

“Bow down their back” = Because they refused to receive God’s truth (cf. Isa. 6:9-10; John 5:40) their backs will be bent under the weight of guilt and punishment.³⁹

McGee: God gives light in order that men might see, but if they are blind, they will not see. The light reveals the blindness of multitudes today. I am amazed that so many intelligent people do not seem to understand what the Bible is all about.⁴⁰

¹¹I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

Missler: Salvation Unto Gentiles

Greek: “They did not stumble so as to fall permanently.” [NIV: “beyond recovery.”] But the tense of the verb “fell” and its contrast with the verb translated “stumble” imply the idea of falling beyond recovery.

Once again the question in Greek was worded to elicit a negative answer, and for the 10th and last time in Romans, Paul responded, *me genoito*: “may it never be!”

Israel experienced not a permanent fall, but a stumbling. It served at least two divine purposes:

³⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³⁸ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

³⁹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁴⁰ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

1) to offer salvation . . . to the Gentiles, and

2) to make Israel envious (lit., “to the provoking of them to jealousy”; cf. Deut. 32:21).

Eph 2:11-13: Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in [note that “in”] Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Cf Eph 5:30-31, For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. (Cf. 1 Cor 6:15-21!)⁴¹

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

And now we come full circle, back to where we started today. Verse 11 in its entirety says: 11 "In that case, I say, isn't it that they have stumbled with the result that they have permanently fallen away?" Heaven forbid! Quite the contrary, it is by means of their stumbling that the deliverance has come to the Gentiles, in order to provoke them to jealousy. After refuting in every way possible the notion that those Jews (the hardened, stone-like ones) who have rejected Yeshua, have also been rejected by The Father, or because they stumbled they are permanently spiritually disabled without the possibility of redemption, Paul explains why it works this way. It is all part of God's plan and it came from His foreknowledge. It was by means of those Jews who refused God's mercy that God first turned His attention to the gentiles. But God delivered the gentiles for a purpose; the purpose for the gentiles (meaning gentile Believers) is to cause the hardened Jews to become jealous and want what the Believing gentiles have: a saving righteousness through Messiah. A righteousness not earned, but rather freely given. A righteousness that comes by trust, and not by works and deeds. Bottom line: these non-Believing Jews are not excluded forever (whether at His doing or their own) and God has a plan to get them back in His favor. And that plan is the gentiles.

Quite amazingly Israel's great sin is really just the beginning of a great process that began 2000 years before Paul was born; in the end it brings blessing back to Israel. And in the middle of the process lies the gentiles.....who also get blessed! As unfathomable as it may seem, it is BECAUSE of Israel's rebellion and unfaithfulness that salvation has come for gentiles. And it is BECAUSE of the salvation of gentiles that God's original target, His chosen people Israel, will be saved.

Why this strange convoluted pathway to redemption and restoration? Why take this route; dangerous, full of detours and littered with potholes? Because there was a promise made two millennia earlier that God fully intended to fulfill because He always keeps His promises:

Genesis 12:1-3 CJB 1 Now ADONAI said to Avram, "Get yourself out of your country, away from your kinsmen and away from your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make of you a great nation, I will bless you, and I will make your name great; and you are to be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

⁴¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

McGee: Reason For Setting Aside The Nation Israel (11:11-21)

The nation Israel was set aside for the salvation of the Gentiles. Paul deals with this in the following section.

In other words: I say then, did they stumble in order that they might fall? Away with the thought -- that's not it. But by their false step, salvation has come to the Gentiles, to provoke Israel to jealousy.

Now Paul opens this verse with the same engaging inquiry as he did verse 1. Do you remember that he raised the question, "Hath God cast away his people?" (v. 1). Rejection is only partial and temporary. His question is, "Have they stumbled in such a way that they will not rise again?" The answer is an emphatic negative. Their fall has enabled God through His providence to open the gates of salvation wide to the Gentiles. The Jew will see the reality of salvation of the Gentiles, that they are experiencing the blessings of God which the Jew thought could come only to him. This should move him to emulation, not jealousy as we define it. In our trips to Israel, we have had several guides who were Jewish. They were puzzled that we were so interested in things that are Jewish in the nation Israel. They marveled at that. I have visited other countries and enjoyed them. I enjoyed England because some of my ancestors came from that area. In Egypt I saw the pyramids and that great hunk of rock there, and now that I have seen it, I don't want to see it again. But I have an interest in Israel that is not equaled in any other nation. The Jewish people don't understand this. One Jewish guide talked to me about it. He said, "I want to know why these things are so important to you."⁴²

BKC: 11:11-12. Paul asked still another question he anticipated from his readers. Did they stumble (cf. 9:32) so as to fall beyond recovery? Literally, the Greek says simply, "Did they stumble so that they fell?" But the tense of the verb "fell" and its contrast with the verb translated "stumble" imply the idea of falling beyond recovery. Once again the question in Greek was worded to elicit a negative answer, and for the 10th and last time in Romans, Paul responded, Not at all! (*mē genoito*; cf. 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1) "They" refers to "the others" (v. 7), the majority of the people of Israel, excluding the "remnant chosen by grace" (v. 5). Israel experienced not a permanent fall, but a stumbling. It served at least two divine purposes: (a) to offer salvation... to the Gentiles, and (b) to make Israel envious (lit., "to the provoking of them to jealousy"; cf. Deut. 32:21). Twice already in his ministry Paul had turned away from unbelieving Jews to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46; 18:6), and he would do so at least once more in Rome (Acts 28:25-28). In so doing he was fulfilling these purposes of God. But Paul was convinced that Israel's transgression (*paraptōma*, "false step," which seems to fit with "stumble"; cf. *paraptōma*, trans. "trespass" in Rom. 5:17-18, 20) was temporary. So he looked beyond its immediate results (riches for the world and... riches for the Gentiles) to the possibility of its removal (how much greater riches will their fullness bring!). "World" here means mankind, not the physical world (cf. "world" in 11:15). Certainly the world has been enriched spiritually because of so many Gentiles coming to Christ (cf. comments on "reconciliation" in v. 15). But even greater riches will be enjoyed by Gentiles after the conversion of Israel at the Lord's return (cf. v. 26). Israel's "fullness" suggests a large-scale conversion (cf. "full number [lit., 'fullness'] of the Gentiles," v. 25).⁴³

⁴² Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁴³ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Guzik: Stumbled... fall: As Paul presents it here, there is a difference between stumbling and falling. Israel stumbled, but they would not fall – in the sense of being removed from God’s purpose and plan. You can recover from a stumble, but if you fall you’re down.

Certainly not! Paul has shown that God is still working through a remnant of Israel today, but wants to make it clear that the sinning majority of Israel is not lost forever.

Through their fall... salvation has come to the Gentiles: We should not forget that in many instances the gospel only went out to the Gentiles after the Jewish people rejected it (Acts 13:46, 18:5-6, 28:25-28). In this sense, the rejection of the gospel by the Jews was riches for the Gentiles.

It wasn’t that the Jewish rejection of Jesus as Messiah caused Gentiles to be saved. It merely gave more opportunity for the gospel to go to the Gentiles, and many Gentiles took advantage of this opportunity.

If by any means I may provoke to jealousy: Yet, Paul’s desire isn’t only that these riches would be enjoyed by the Gentiles only, but that the Jews would be provoked to a good kind of jealousy, motivating them to receive some of the blessings the Gentiles enjoyed.

“It is a matter for profound regret that just as Israel refused to accept this salvation when it was offered to them, so the Gentiles have all too often refused to make Israel envious. Instead of showing to God’s ancient people the attractiveness of the Christian way, Christians have characteristically treated the Jews with hatred, prejudice, persecution, malice, and all uncharitableness. Christians should not take this passage calmly.” (Morris)⁴⁴

ESV: Israel's hardening is not the final word. God planned salvation history so that Israel's trespass would open salvation for the Gentiles, and the Jews in turn would be provoked to jealousy when they see Gentiles being saved and enjoying a relationship with God.⁴⁵

The purpose of the next two chapters is to insist on Gentile humility in light of the non-believing Jews, with whom God’s plan is not yet finished.

CJSB: 11–15 In this passage Sha’ul gives the Gentile believers in Rome their mission “to provoke them [Isra’el] to jealousy” (v. 11) for Yeshua their Messiah. Sha’ul, the emissary to the Gentiles (v. 13), had just written that he would give up even his own salvation to see his people saved (Rom. 9:3–4). Thus, as their emissary, the Gentile believer has something of the same calling. The outcome would be “life from the dead” (Rom. 11:15).

Whereas chronologically the good news was preached first to the Jew and thereafter to all nations (Acts 1:8; Rom. 1:16), the question must be asked: How can a Gentile believer present an effective witness to the Jewish people of their own Messiah if the delivery of the message is non-Jewish and culturally stripped of its Jewish origins? Jews will never be provoked to jealousy by a non-Jewish message and it would be seen as counterfeit. For all of Isra’el to declare, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Adonai,” the message must be authentically Jewish.

Humility, as a “wild olive [branch]” (Rom. 11:17), will be more effective in provoking the Jewish people to jealousy. The Gentile believer must not be arrogant toward the Jews—that is, condescending toward God’s chosen people (v. 18). The non-Jew needs to remember that salvation came about in part because of Isra’el’s stubbornness (“some of the branches were broken off”), so they shouldn’t boast against the “natural branches.” Salvation is a free gift from

⁴⁴ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

⁴⁵ ESV Study Bible Notes

God and the partial hardening of Jewish hearts toward Yeshua means salvation for them (vv. 22–24).

For more on “Jewish-Gentile Relations,” see reading at Galatians 3:26–29.⁴⁶

¹²Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

Missler: “Diminishing”: numerical word; not all are rejected.⁴⁷

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Every now and then a lesson comes along that compels me to preach as much as I teach; this is one of those. Paul has spent the first 12 verses of Romans chapter 11 summarizing some significant theological principles he has been carefully constructing since chapter 1. His first theological principle is that despite the high level of sinning and lack of faithfulness that has been demonstrated by Israel (and is obvious to any observer) oddly enough God has not cast aside or rejected the Jewish people as His chosen elect as we might imagine He would. This bogus claim of some Christian denominations that God has rejected His people Israel is what has led to the rampant anti-Semitism that has been present for centuries. It is the German Lutheran Church that has led the way in modern times by claiming that God’s justification for abandoning His Old Testament people the Hebrews and bringing onboard (as a replacement) a new and different people in the New Testament (gentile Christians) is that the Jews killed Jesus.

While anyone who has read the Gospels can rightfully complain that many Jews, especially the Jewish religious leadership, were complicit in Yeshua’s execution, it was gentile Romans who actually whipped Him, nailed Him to a wooden cross, and brutally executed Him. Nonetheless, whoever wins that ongoing debate over who is most responsible for killing Christ achieves nothing because both sides are arguing about a red herring. Paul has been explaining that what the Jews (the Hebrews) have done (good or bad) in the recent or ancient past has no bearing on the special status God holds for them. How can this be? Because God made His promise to Israel, going all the way back to Abraham many centuries before there was an Israel, that they are His elect based on His grace and mercy and not based on Israel’s merit or their faithfulness. Whether the Jews bear the full weight of Christ’s death, or partial responsibility or none is completely irrelevant; it plays no role in God’s decision to maintain His acceptance of them as His chosen people.

The second theological principle Paul has elucidated is that those Jews whose hearts became stone-like against accepting Yeshua as their Messiah and Lord experienced that hardening partly because of their own choice to behave wickedly and unfaithfully, and partly because of a choice by God that affected their minds and thus prevented them from accepting Christ. In fact, Paul pointed out that a kind of divine intervention, which included hardening of hearts, was nothing new and uses Deuteronomy 29 to prove it. Then he uses the Prophet Isaiah to point out that it was prophesied that this pattern of God hardening rebellious hearts for His own purposes would continue. Thus it ought to come as no surprise to anyone that in Paul’s day God would harden the hearts of some Jews who were refusing to accept Yeshua as their Messiah. I want to say this

⁴⁶ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

⁴⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

a little differently: Paul is saying to Jews and gentiles in Rome that God hardening even His own people is NOT only a thing of the distant past of Israel's history, as in Moses's day 13 centuries earlier; but such a divine hardening in fact remains as an active tool in God's tool box. The proof of it is all those Jews who refused to trust in their Messiah who have had their hearts hardened by God in response.

If you are paying attention to what Paul is saying, then such a claim is pretty sobering. Under certain circumstances God hardens gentile hearts (as with Pharaoh) and He hardens Jewish hearts (as with the non-Believing Jews of New Testament times). I don't know about you, but this is a characteristic of God that I'm not especially fond of. I of course accept that it is His choice and He is sovereign to do as He wills it; but that doesn't mean I have to be comfortable with it. This is where various and competing theological doctrines with names like predestination and predetermination stand in opposition to other theological doctrines with names such as prescience and free will. And of course, as humans do, unyielding stances are taken on both sides of the issue. Whereas over the past several centuries predestination and predetermination have dominated Christian theology especially in Europe, in more modern times free will and prescience (that is, God pre-knows what we're each going to do or choose) have gained steam because Westerners just don't like an attribute of God that takes our individual destiny out of our own hands. So the goal of the one side is to make God into a stern and rigid taskmaster who, like a typical European Monarch, uses humans as little more than disposable pawns in a cosmic chess match; while the goal of the other side is to make God more like a congenial and cooperative genie in the bottle who is there to make our wishes and dreams come true if only we'll approach Him correctly. Paul leaves such a matter as a mystery and makes no attempt to defend this difficult characteristic of God. Paul merely tells us that on the one hand our own free will plays an enormous role in our destiny, but on the other hand so does God's divine intervention; and His intervention is not necessarily for each person's immediate benefit. Often there is a much larger picture in play of which we have no idea.

But rather than keep it to Himself in this particular case God chose to reveal the surprising reason that He hardened the hearts of many of His own elect against their own Jewish Messiah, Yeshua. So the third theological principle we learned from Paul is stated in verse 11:

Romans 11:11 CJB 11 "In that case, I say, isn't it that they have stumbled with the result that they have permanently fallen away?" Heaven forbid! Quite the contrary, it is by means of their stumbling that the deliverance has come to the Gentiles, in order to provoke them to jealousy.

Just to be clear: "they" that have stumbled are the hardened Jews, just as "them" who will be provoked to jealousy are these same hardened Jews. So, God reveals that as strange as it may seem, He reached down from Heaven and intentionally hardened the hearts of thousands, millions, of His own elect in order that the Gospel would be taken to the gentiles who were NOT His elect; and this was so that gentiles could also be saved.

But the strangeness of God's decision doesn't stop there; the final few words of verse 11 say: "In order to provoke them (the hardened Jews) to jealousy." So, God has intentionally hardened the hearts of the majority of Jews in order that gentiles can be saved in huge numbers. Yet, that, too, had a divine purpose. The now saved gentiles have been given salvation for the express purpose of provoking to jealousy all those Jews that God hardened so that they, too, will be saved! I call this phenomenon The Circle of Salvation.

But Paul has even more to say on this subject in Romans 11. Up to now, and for the past few chapters (at the very least since chapter 7) Paul has been aiming his monologue primarily at

Jews. But now in Romans 11:13 he abruptly changes up and turns primarily towards gentiles. Open your Bible to Romans 11 and we'll read from verse 13 to the end.

McGee: Israel has been set aside; that is, God is not dealing with them as a nation at this time. When God does begin to deal with them, they won't have any problem with the Arab -- that conflict will be completely resolved. Israel will not live in fear, because God has made it very clear that every man is going to dwell in peace and tranquility. "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it" (Mic. 4:4).

Now since their setting aside has brought the grace of God to Gentiles, what about the grace of God toward the Gentiles after the Jews are received again? It will be multiplied. James made this clear at that great council at Jerusalem. He said that God is calling out from among Gentiles a people for His name just as He is calling out Israelites. Then God says, "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" (Acts 15:16-17). This is my reason for periodically making a statement -- that sometimes puzzles folk -- that the greatest "revival" took place on this earth before the church got here. (I use the word revival in the popular sense of a turning to God.) A man by the name of Jonah went into the city of Ninevah and saw the entire city turn to God. It is true that there was a great turning to God on the Day of Pentecost (which marks the beginning of the church), but what was the percentage? Pentecost was a feast in Jerusalem to which all male Israelites were required to go -- there must have been several hundred thousand Jews in the environs of Jerusalem. How many were saved? Well, judging from the record, there were probably about ten thousand who were saved after the first few days of preaching. That is actually a small percentage. And the greatest revival since then took place in the Hawaiian Islands. The percentage there was probably 50 percent. But that was small in comparison to the days of Jonah. And I believe that the greatest revival will take place after the church leaves this earth. Actually, the church has not done too well. I believe that after the church has been raptured, multitudes of Gentiles will turn to God -- not only in the Great Tribulation period, but in the Millennium. Gentile nations will enter the Millennium, and a great many of them are going to like the rule of Christ, and they will turn to God during that period. I believe this with all my heart.⁴⁸

ESV: The term world is another word for Gentiles here. Full inclusion looks forward to the fulfillment of God's saving promises to ethnic Israel. Paul argues from the lesser to the greater: if Israel's sin brought salvation to the Gentiles, then the blessing will be even greater when all Israel is saved (see v. 15).⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁴⁹ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹³For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

Missler: The church at Rome was predominately Gentiles; Paul keeps the Jews and Gentiles distinct in this passage. Paul then affirmed his special position as the apostle to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 9:15; Gal. 1:16; 2:7-8; Eph. 3:8). [Twice already in his ministry Paul had turned away from unbelieving Jews to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46; 18:6), and he would do so at least once more in Rome (Acts 28:25-28).]⁵⁰

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

The opening words of verse 13 make it clear that Paul is refocusing his thoughts towards the gentiles of the congregation in Rome. And now that we've read those remaining verses of chapter 11 we can see that from the far view Paul's purpose is to make sure that gentile Believers understand that just because God hardened so many Jews IN ORDER that gentiles would be saved, gentiles shouldn't misunderstand God's motives for doing so. The goal all along remains the same: that all Israel would be saved.

Verses 13 and 14 have Paul explaining that even though he indeed is an emissary to gentiles, he is and remains a Jew. He refers to the Jews as "my own people"; so, Paul continues to stay firmly identified with the Jewish people. For most of us that seems self-evident but to much of the Church this comes as a surprise. Most often when Paul is depicted in a painting, it is as a European: whether that is Spanish, English, or French. Often, he has a thin pale face, a pointy mustache and is tall and slender. I have seen precious few depictions of Paul as an olive skinned, dark haired, brown eyed Hebrew. This is not by accident; there is a sub-conscious perspective of Paul that has been ingrained within Christianity for at least 18 centuries that since Paul is the Apostle to the gentiles, then surely, he must have re-identified himself more as a gentile than with his original Jewish heritage. Never mind that at every turn he speaks of the Jews as "his people" or "his brethren" or even carefully recounts his personal heritage both from a national and religious viewpoint as a Jew, and from a tribal viewpoint as a Benjamite. In Philippians 3:5 he even adds to that by saying that he is a Pharisee.

Philippians 3:4-5 CJB If anyone else thinks he has grounds for putting confidence in human qualifications, I have better grounds: 5 • b'rit-milah on the eighth day, • by birth belonging to the people of Isra'el, • from the tribe of Binyamin, • a Hebrew-speaker, with Hebrew-speaking parents, • in regard to the Torah, a Parush.....

So let's put aside this nonsensical fantasy that Paul was some kind of a convert to a gentile, or had any gentile DNA in him whatsoever. He was a Jew through and through and proudly proclaimed a long Israelite heritage on several occasions, as recorded by his own hand in the New Testament.

McGee: Perhaps my translation will help you in the understanding of these two verse: "But I speak to you, the Gentiles. Inasmuch, then, as I [Paul] am an apostle of Gentiles, I glorify my ministry, if by any means I may move to emulation, that is, provoke to jealousy them of my flesh, and may save some of them."

In other words, Paul says, in effect, "I am an apostle to the Gentiles, and I rejoice in that. But as I preach to the Gentiles, I hope it will move many of my own people to turn to Christ also."

⁵⁰ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Paul, you remember, wrote to the Corinthians, "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law" (1Cor. 9:20).

This is the reason Paul went to Jerusalem with his head shaven and under an oath -- he was trying to win his people to Christ. Should he have done this since he lived under grace? Living under grace means that he could do it if he wanted to. In his letter to the Corinthians he continued, "To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law" (1Cor. 9:21). In other words, he was obeying Christ. Then Paul says, "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" (1Cor. 9:22). He was first of all fulfilling his office as an apostle to the Gentiles, and in so doing, he was trying to move his Jewish brethren to turn to Christ. Some turned to Christ -- only a few -- but some. In all of this Paul was fulfilling his ministry, and God was accomplishing His purpose in this age with both Jew and Gentile.

I understand the satisfaction Paul felt in doing what God had called him to do. God has a place for you, my friend. He may want you to get busy and teach a Sunday school class, do personal work, or reach people through a business enterprise. Or He may want you to support another who is really getting out the Word of God. Whatever it is, you will experience great satisfaction in doing what you are confident God has called you to do.⁵¹

BKC: 11:13-15. Paul then singled out a part of the Christian community at Rome, saying, I am talking to you Gentiles. Though writing, Paul used terms referring to oral communication, a fact with implications for the inspiration of the Scriptures. Paul then affirmed his special position as the apostle to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 9:15; Gal. 1:16; 2:7-8; Eph. 3:8), and declared, I make much of (lit., "I glorify" or "I magnify") my ministry. Part of Paul's purpose for magnifying his service to the Gentiles was to provoke to jealousy his fellow Jews (Rom. 11:11), resulting in the salvation of some of them (cf. 9:1-4; 10:1). Any such Jews won to Christ would be part of the "remnant chosen by grace." Then Paul reminded his Gentiles readers that Israel's rejection meant the reconciliation of the world in the purpose of God. Because Israel rejected Christ, the gospel was taken to these Gentiles. In Scripture reconciliation is a work of God in the death of Christ which does not actually restore an individual to fellowship with God but provides the basis for him to be restored to fellowship (cf. 2 Cor. 5:18-20). This statement serves to explain the meaning of the phrases "riches for the world" and "riches for the Gentiles" in Romans 11:12. (When a person comes to Christ by faith God's work of reconciliation is appropriated to him and he then has fellowship with God and the spiritual enmity is removed.)

Because Paul was convinced that Israel's stumbling is temporary, he asked, What will their acceptance be but life from the dead? (lit., "out from dead ones") This question explains the clause, "How much greater riches will their fullness bring" (v. 12). Israel's "acceptance" of Christ is related to "the first resurrection" (Rev. 20:4-6), the resurrection of life (John 5:29, kjv). The first resurrection includes dead saints at the Rapture (1 Thes. 4:13-18), martyred Great Tribulation saints raised at Christ's return (Rev. 20:4, 5b), and believing Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:1-2). The second resurrection will include all the wicked dead to be judged at the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:5a, 12-13). The teaching that there will be one general resurrection of all humanity at one time fails to take these distinctions into account.⁵²

⁵¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁵² The Bible Knowledge Commentary

ESV: 13–14 As an apostle, Paul had a special calling and commission to preach the good news to the Gentiles. But he uses his ministry to the Gentiles also to benefit the Jews, for he hopes that the more Gentiles come to salvation, the more this will provoke the Jews to jealousy, so that many will be saved.⁵³

14If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are my flesh and might save some of them.*

Missler: Paul is called to the Gentiles; but his heart is still with his countrymen.

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

What he is explaining in verse 14 is that even though he has just said that it is God's purpose for saved gentiles to provoke unsaved Jews to jealousy and hopefully redemption, Paul at least partly agreed to this thankless task of evangelizing gentiles (that put him at odds with most of his own people) in order that he, too, might provoke Jews to jealousy and thus urge them on to salvation in Yeshua. That is, Paul the Messianic Jew provoking to jealousy traditional Jews.

15For if the casting away of them *be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*

Missler: "If": 1st class condition ("and it is") Zech 13:8, 9. [Antidefamation League has labeled me anti-Semitic because I highlighted this passage on the radio!]

Cf. v.12 and v.15 (climactic).

Transgression casting away, rejection

Riches reconciliation

Diminishing life from the dead

Some equate "Life from the dead" to Israel's "acceptance" of Christ, and related to "the first resurrection" (Rev. 20:4-6), the resurrection of life (John 5:29, KJV).

The first resurrection includes:

a) dead saints at the Rapture (1 Thes. 4:13-18), b) martyred Great Tribulation saints raised at Christ's return (Rev. 20:4, 5b), and

b) believing Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:1-2). The second resurrection will include all the wicked dead to be judged at the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:5a, 12-13).

The teaching that there will be one general resurrection of all humanity at one time fails to take these distinctions into account.

However, "Life from the dead" is in a national sense, as in Ezek 37: 11-14, v.11 predicts the heresy of the Dominionists, Kingdom Now theologians, et al. Verse 12: "Therefore..."

These arguments should have ended on May 14, 1948.

Next: (Dan 11:36-45 Terrifying war)

Dan 12:1,2, And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a

⁵³ ESV Study Bible Notes

nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

(More than “70 A.D.”! Just before the resurrection, Second Coming, restoration of Israel, etc.) Restoration includes the resurrection (of those who missed the *Harpazo*)... rapture⁵⁴

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

In verse 15 he expounds upon his reasoning by saying that if Jews casting aside their Messiah means reconciliation with God for the world, that Jews (in much larger numbers) finally accepting Yeshua will have an even greater impact! Please notice Paul’s use of the term “world”. “World” here means non-Jews: gentiles. So here we get a very good definition of what Paul means by “the world” in his letters. The “world”, for Paul, usually means unsaved gentiles: pagans. So, for Paul the “world” is set over and against the Jewish people in the sense of non-Jews versus Jews, and in the sense of worshippers of pagan gods versus worshippers of the God of Israel. But even more, once a gentile becomes saved, he graduates out of the world and into the Kingdom of God. So, for Paul a Believer, including a gentile Believer, is no longer part of “the world”.

Where would Paul have derived his understanding of what “the world” is? While I have no proof of it, I think it must have been something that the risen Yeshua showed to Him, likely through another Believer in Damascus when Paul was first selected and recovering from his blindness and (no doubt) trauma of meeting the resurrected Messiah. As Believers, it is common for us to speak about “the world”. But what does Christ mean by it? What does the New Testament in general mean by the term “the world”? And where as Believers do we fit? Here is what Christ had to say, at length, in a recorded prayer that Yeshua prayed to the Father.

John 17:1-18 CJB 1 After Yeshua had said these things, he looked up toward heaven and said, "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, so that the Son may glorify you- 2 just as you gave him authority over all mankind, so that he might give eternal life to all those whom you have given him. 3 And eternal life is this: to know you, the one true God, and him whom you sent, Yeshua the Messiah. 4 "I glorified you on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. 5 Now, Father, glorify me alongside yourself. Give me the same glory I had with you before the world existed. 6 "I made your name known to the people you gave me out of the world. They were yours, you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me is from you, 8 because the words you gave me I have given to them, and they have received them. They have really come to know that I came from you, and they have come to trust that you sent me. 9 "I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given to me, because they are yours. 10 Indeed, all I have is yours, and all you have is mine, and in them I have been glorified. 11 Now I am no longer in the world. They are in the world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, guard them by the power of your name, which you have given to me, so that they may be one, just as we are. 12 When I was with them, I guarded them by the power of your name, which you have given to me; yes, I kept watch over them; and not one of them was destroyed (except the one meant for destruction, so that the Tanakh might be fulfilled). 13 But now, I am coming to you; and I say these things while I am still in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. 14 "I have given them your word, and the world hated them, because they do not belong to the world- just as I myself do not belong to the world. 15 I don't ask you to take them out of the world, but to

⁵⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

protect them from the Evil One. 16 They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 17 Set them apart for holiness by means of the truth- your word is truth. 18 Just as you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

Clearly the term “the world” has a double meaning. On the one hand “the world” is meant as the secular people of our day mean it: the total human population of planet Earth and all that accompanies it. But on the other hand, from a spiritual perspective, “the world” is the unsaved. So clearly gentiles are part of “the world” UNTIL we become Believers, and then we’re not. Just as clearly Jews are not, and have never been, part of “the world” as God sees it. And yet, since Yeshua’s advent, Jews are not as distinct from “the world” as they may have once thought they were.

Thus, Jews and gentile Believers are seen by our Lord as separate from “the world” and therefore that is how we are to see ourselves. And, folks; this is not an easy place to be so struggle is to be expected. We are truly hanging suspended; no longer of the world, but still in the world. Not yet in Heaven, but being asked to live a Heavenly lifestyle while still in this world. The Good News is that our Savior lived in the same condition as we do so He understands our predicament and can relate to us; and He is our advocate in Heaven.

McGee: It is wonderful to anticipate the future. I think the greatest days are ahead of us. From man's point of view, the future is dark. Man has gotten his world in a mess. I felt sorry for a businessman to whom I was talking in Hawaii. We started chatting on the golf course. He told me that he was a businessman from Chicago -- a vice-president of some concern. Obviously he had money, but, oh, how pessimistic he was about the future. Many thinking people are very pessimistic about the future of our civilization. But my God is on the throne, and He is going to straighten it out. The greatest days are yet in the future. Oh, the glorious future a child of God has. If I were not a dignified preacher, I would say Hallelujah!⁵⁵

ESV: If the rejection of the majority of Israel has meant that many Gentiles (the world) are now reconciled to God through Christ, then the acceptance of the Jews (their future coming to Christ in large numbers) will bring about the final resurrection (life from the dead) and the end of history, so that from that point on people will praise God forever and ever (see v. 12). Others think “life from the dead” is a figurative expression for great spiritual revival.⁵⁶

CJSB: It will be life from the dead! Sha’ul reveals that Isra’el’s temporary and partial (vv. 17, 25) rejection of their Messiah will bring salvation to the Gentiles. In turn, as Gentile believers seek to provoke Jews to jealousy, this will result in a greater outpouring in the coming salvation of Isra’el. Thus “life from the dead” begins with Sha’ul’s ministry to the Gentiles.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁵⁶ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁵⁷ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

¹⁶For if the firstfruit *be* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*: and if the root *be* holy, so *are* the branches.

Missler: First of two illustrations: taken from God’s instructions to Israel to take “a cake from the first of [their] ground meal and present it as an offering” (Num 15:20) after they entered the land of Canaan and reaped their first wheat harvest. This offering was to be repeated each year at their harvests. The cake made from the first ground meal of the wheat harvest was sanctified or made holy by being offered to God. As Paul explained, If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits (lit., “If the firstfruits”) is holy, then the whole batch is holy.

What was the “firstfruits”? Covenant to Abraham: “all nations of the world will be blessed.”⁵⁸

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

In verse 16 Paul is going to use two metaphors to tell the gentiles that despite their good fortune of being marked for salvation by God, hardened Israel still has a future with Yehoveh. The imagery that Paul employs is first of all a baked product made of grain, and it is taken from Numbers 15.

Numbers 15:18-21 CJB 18 "Speak to the people of Isra'el; tell them, 'When you enter the land where I am bringing you 19 and eat bread produced in the land, you are to set aside a portion as a gift for ADONAI. 20 Set aside from your first dough a cake as a gift; set it aside as you would set aside a portion of the grain from the threshing-floor. 21 From your first dough you will give ADONAI a portion as a gift through all your generations.

Paul is using the theological principle of firstfruits to develop his thought. Numbers 15 speaks of offering up to God a piece of the bread dough that is made from grain grown and harvested in the Promised Land. Even to this day, some Jews when baking Challah bread (that special bread that is made as a tradition for Shabbat) will pinch off a piece of the dough and throw it in a fire. However, nowhere in Numbers is it implied that the remaining portion of dough becomes “holy” as Paul says. An error in Paul’s understanding of the Torah? Probably not. One of the difficulties in interpreting the New Testament, besides the fact that we have Hebrew thought attempting to be communicated in the Greek language, is that the writings of the New Testament are not theological treatises that have been vetted by fellow Hebrew scholars, or are they written for academics of the modern Western world. They were written using common Jewish cultural terms, idioms, expressions, and manners of speaking usual and standard for the Jewish communities of that era. Much too often, using much too little knowledge of Judaism and Jewish culture of that era, very good modern commentators will try to attach a greater level of precision to the words than are meant.

As an example: in the Gospels, when we find Yeshua either in, or on His way to, Jerusalem for the 3 Spring Feasts of Passover, Matzah, and Firstfruits, the New Testament accounts will interchange the terms Passover and Matzah. That is: while technically Passover is the first of the 3 Feasts and is only a one day feast, it is common in the New Testament to call the entire series of 3 Spring Feasts “Passover”. Just as common is to refer to the entire series of 3 as “Matzah”. The writer isn’t confused; it was merely the standard way of speaking among lay people (Jews) in that era.

We find the same issue with the terms “holy” and “unclean” in the New Testament. Those 2 terms indeed do have, on the one hand, very precise definitions. But on the other hand they are

⁵⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

often used in broad and imprecise ways because that's how the common Jews of the day used them. For instance: technically, unclean is a term that is ONLY used to describe something that is otherwise a permissible item to eat, wear, touch, etc. But, that otherwise permissible item can no longer be used because due to some kind of error in its handling, the item has been made ritually unclean. As an example: a piece of lamb to eat is permissible as food. However, if not handled properly (perhaps not enough blood has been drained from it), then the lamb is rendered unclean. So, what is normally permissible cannot now be used. On the other hand, if an item is considered as prohibited then the handling of it becomes a moot subject. For instance: a pig cannot ever be food. Technically a pig is not unclean; it is merely prohibited to eat under any circumstance. It is not food no matter how it is handled. So, whether something is prohibited, or something is permissible but it has been mishandled and now rendered unclean, the final result is the same: it can't be used. Thus, in the New Testament we'll find that sometimes the term unclean means "ritually impure" according to The Law of Moses, and other times it merely means "it can't be touched or used" for whatever reason and sometimes the reason is far more cultural than Biblical.

The term holy also became used in a similar fashion in the New Testament. There is the technical meaning for holy that means set apart for God in accordance with the Law of Moses; it can even mean that only priests can partake of whatever it might be. But in common speech among Jews it came to mean something that the lay person informally dedicated to God or it is assigned a religious connotation even if it has nothing to do with any command or regulation from the Law of Moses. The term "holy" is used in both ways in the New Testament. Let me give you an illustration. Christians are fond to say about a person that they admire that they are a "godly" man or woman. We don't mean this from a technical sense or that they are god-like, or really have any direct connection to God at all. Rather it just means that they are good, upright, and not only profess to be religious but live a life that reflects strong moral standards that exemplify good character similar to what can be found in the Bible. Very likely Paul meant holy in this sense in reference to the lump and the whole loaf; because certainly otherwise he is simply incorrect about his claim that the whole loaf becomes ritually holy because a small piece of the dough is ritually dedicated to God, as the Torah prescribes.

So, all Paul was apparently getting at is that if a portion of the whole is holy before God, then it can be assumed that the entire portion is also holy as opposed to unclean. Then he adds yet another metaphor with the use of the olive tree (a real favorite among modern Messianic Jews). He says that if a tree's roots are holy, then its branches must also be holy since they are all parts of a whole. All parts of the tree receive the same nourishment from the same source; its roots. Paul is not talking about any kind of actual Torah defined holiness; rather it is simply meant as a broad illustration. So we must not try to dissect his examples too far, but rather just get the general idea he's trying to impart that all members of a whole are infected with either the same holiness or they are defiled with the same uncleanness. A tree whose roots are unclean can't have holy branches. And, a tree whose roots are holy can't have unclean branches. However, the branches can be removed from the tree if they become diseased; they can be pruned before they infect the other branches or maybe even eventually kill the roots.

What is the whole loaf of bread an illustration of? What is the olive tree with its branches and roots illustrating? Both are illustrations of the same thing: the Jewish people (or more technically, the Hebrew people in total since the Jews are but a remnant of the original Hebrew people). After introducing the two illustrations of verse 16, in verse 17 Paul takes the metaphor of the olive tree a bit further when he speaks of grafting a wild olive tree into the trunk of a

cultivated olive tree. The wild olive represents gentiles. The cultivated olive tree represents Jews. So, the image is of something somewhat similar but not quite the same (the wild olive), being grafted into something that has been carefully cultivated and cared for by a gardener. I've heard horticulturalists try to tear this apart with scientific tests and methods, but Paul was not a horticulturist or even a farmer. This passage was not intended as a lesson on tree grafting; it was merely a general word picture for use by people of an ancient world where most worked in agriculture at one task or another and rudimentary grafting was in common use.

Thus, continuing with agricultural terms, Paul warns that the wild olive derives a benefit from being grafted into the cultivated olive; it receives the same care and nourishment that the cultivated olive receives since the wild olive has been artificially made part of the cultivated tree. But, the wild olive doesn't ever convert and become a cultivated olive, or replace the cultivated olive, and the wild olive should not think that it does. Therefore, using the grammatical technique called personification (assigning a human attribute to something that isn't human), the wild olive should not boast about its good fortune of being attached to the cultivated olive tree. And especially it should not think that it can become better than the original, natural, cultivated olive tree.

What is the main reason for the wild olive being cautioned to not get proud? Because the wild olive branches have been grafted in where some of the natural branches of the cultivated olive tree were removed. And why were the cultivated olive branches removed from their own tree? Because they were found to have no trust. Clearly since it is "trust" in Messiah's faithfulness that Paul has been preaching since chapter 1, this is what he is speaking of here. Therefore, if some wild olives (gentiles) were grafted onto the cultivated Jewish olive tree, they shouldn't expect a different treatment or outcome than the natural branches received. That is, the gentile branches stay attached only so long as that trust remains sincere, active and alive. The moment trust ends, the wild olive branches (like the original cultivated branches) are pruned off of the tree by God and thereby removed from their source of life and sustenance.

There have been never ending debates in theological circles about the roots of the cultivated olive tree and what they represent and what their nourishment is. It is usual in Christian circles to say that the roots are Jesus. Sorry, that just doesn't work for all kinds of reasons. First, the cultivated olive tree is clearly the Jewish people in general; not Believers per se. Second, the natural branches of the tree that remain on the tree are Believing Jews, but the trunk and the root system have always been Jewish (Hebrew). Third, the roots of the Jewish people are the Patriarchs. But fourth, what makes the Patriarchs the Patriarchs is the covenant of Abraham. Without that covenant there is no Father Abraham and no line of promise to hand down to Isaac and then to Jacob. Without the Abrahamic covenant there is no division of the world into gentiles and Hebrews. And further, whenever Yeshua is described from a horticultural perspective in the Bible He is not a root; He is either a shoot or a vine. He Himself has a root that He springs from. And Yeshua's root is Jacob, through the tribe of Judah, the clan of Jessie (described in horticultural terms as the stump), and the family of King David.

So here is the unmistakable theological principle that Paul makes; one that much of the institutional Church has denied and hated for 1800 years. Gentile Believers (Christians) exist and are sustained spiritually only by being artificially attached to a strong Jewish source, itself fed from the Covenant of Abraham. Israel's covenants with God are what make Israel, Israel. And what makes gentiles saved and forgiven is the goal of those same covenants: Yeshua, of the family of King David. Christ, the Jew. So when some elements of Christianity demand that the Old Testament and all it represents is abolished, what is being demanded is that Paul's cultivated

olive tree that we as Believers are grafted into....the place where we receive our life and sustenance..... is cut down, and its root system is dug up and destroyed. This is spiritual suicide.

McGee: You may recall that in the Book of Numbers, God said, "Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the Lord an heave offering in your generations" (Num. 15:21). "Dough," of course, is bread dough! A part of the dough was offered to God as a token that all of it was acceptable.

The "firstfruit" evidently refers to the origin of the nation: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. "Holy" has no reference to any moral quality, but to the fact that it was set apart for God. Now if the firstfruit, or the first dough -- that little bit of dough -- was set apart for God, what about the whole harvest? Since Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were set apart for God, what about the nation? It all belongs to God, you see. God is not through with the nation Israel.⁵⁹

BKC: 11:16. Paul was convinced that Israel's stumbling is temporary rather than permanent and that the nation will be restored as God's people. With two illustrations Paul showed why he believed this. His first illustration was taken from God's instructions to Israel to take "a cake from the first of [their] ground meal and present it as an offering" (Num. 15:20) after they entered the land of Canaan and reaped their first wheat harvest. This offering was to be repeated each year at their harvests. The cake made from the first ground meal of the wheat harvest was sanctified or made holy by being offered to God. As Paul explained, If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits (lit., "If the firstfruits") is holy, then the whole batch is holy (lit., "the lump is also"). Paul's second illustration was that of a tree: If the root is holy, so are the branches. In both illustrations the principle is the same: what is considered first contributes its character to what is related to it. With a tree, the root obviously comes first and contributes the nature of that type of tree to the branches that come later. With the cake presented to the Lord, the flour for the cake is taken from the ground meal, but that cake is formed and baked first and presented as a firstfruit. Since it is set apart to the Lord first, it sanctifies the whole harvest. The firstfruits and the root represent the patriarchs of Israel or Abraham personally, and the lump and the branches represent the people of Israel. As a result Israel is set apart (holy) to God, and her "stumbling" (rejection of Christ) must therefore be temporary.⁶⁰

Guzik: If the firstfruit is holy: The firstfruit probably represents the first Christians, who were Jewish. Their conversion was something holy and good for the church. After all, each of the apostles and most of the human authors of Scripture were Jewish. If the conversion of this firstfruit was good for the Gentiles, how much better will it be when the complete harvest is brought in!

Many commentators take the firstfruit here as the patriarchs, but it fits better to see it as the original core group of Christians – who were each Jewish.⁶¹

ESV: Two illustrations are used that teach the same truth. The firstfruits and the root probably refer to the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) and the saving promises given to them. If the firstfruits and root are consecrated to God, so too are the whole lump (of dough) and the branches (i.e., the Jewish people as a whole); see Num. 15:17–21 for OT origin of the imagery.

⁵⁹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁶⁰ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁶¹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

As Paul has already explained in Romans 9-10, it does not follow from this that every Jewish person will be saved, but it does indicate that God will be faithful to his promises (9:6) and seems to imply that in the future many more Jews will be saved.⁶²

17And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

Missler: Paul's second illustration was that of a tree: If the root is holy, so are the branches. Branches = Israelites

You, wild olive tree = Gentiles, taken against nature... partakers of the sustenance...

In both illustrations the principle is the same: what is considered first contributes its character to what is related to it.⁶³

McGee: You and I benefit because of the nation Israel. That is the reason I could never be anti-Semitic. I owe too much to them as a nation.⁶⁴

BKC: 11:17-21. In the apostolic generation God put aside as a whole the people of Israel, an action Paul described as one in which some of the branches have been broken off. The apostle then spoke directly to Gentile Christians: And you (sing.), though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root (lit., "have become a co-partner of the root of the fatness of the olive"). To be so blessed by God and His grace, however, is no reason to boast, which Paul warned against. Since they were like "a wild olive shoot" grafted to a regular cultivated olive tree, they were indebted to Israel, not Israel to them. "Salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22).

Normally a branch of a cultivated olive tree is grafted into a wild olive tree, the opposite of what Paul spoke of here. But he knew that grafting the wild into the cultivated was not the norm (though it was done), for later he said it was "contrary to nature" (Rom. 11:24).

To reinforce his warning Paul declared, You do not support the root, but the root supports you. The root of the tree is the source of life and nourishment to all the branches, and Abraham is "the father of all who believe" (4:11-12, 16-17). So Gentile believers are linked to Abraham; in one sense they owe their salvation to him, not vice versa.

The apostle anticipated the rebuttal a Gentile believer might make: Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in. Though that was not the real reason the branches were broken off, Paul accepted the statement for the sake of argument. Then he pointed out that the real reason the branches were broken off was Israel's unbelief and that any Gentile as a grafted-in branch stands (cf. 5:2) by faith. Therefore Paul warned Gentile Christians individually again, Do not be arrogant (lit., "Do not think high" of yourself; cf. 12:16) but be afraid, have a proper fear of God. Paul reminded them, For if God did not spare the natural branches, Israel, He will not spare you either. In Greek this is a first-class condition in which the conditional statement beginning with "if" is assumed to be true. As clearly stated in the previous verses, this speaks of Israel's "fall" (11:11), "loss" (v. 12), and "rejection" (v. 15), for "the branches have been broken off" (v. 17) "because of unbelief" (v. 20). This section (vv. 11-21) explains the righteousness of God's

⁶² ESV Study Bible Notes

⁶³ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁶⁴ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

sovereign choice. If God is righteous in temporarily putting aside Israel as a whole for unbelief, He certainly could put aside the Gentiles for boasting and haughtiness.⁶⁵

Guzik: Some of the branches... a wild olive tree: With the picture of the tree and the branches, Paul reminds the Gentile Christians that it is only by God's grace that they can be grafted into the "tree" of God – the "root" of which is Israel.

"When an old olive tree had lost its vigor, it seems that one remedy in antiquity was to cut away the failing branches and graft in some wild olive shoots. The result was said to be the invigoration of the failing tree." (Morris)

The Jewish Talmud speaks of Ruth the Moabitess as a "godly shoot" engrafted into Israel. (Cited in Morris)⁶⁶

ESV: The illustration of the root and its branches is elaborated upon in vv. 17–24. The people of God are portrayed here as an olive tree (cf. Jer. 11:16–19; Hos. 14:6–7). When Paul says some branches were removed, he probably has in mind the majority of the Jews of his day. Gentiles as wild shoots were grafted into the olive tree and now share in the root (the promises made to the patriarchs).⁶⁷

CJSB: 17–24 But if some of the branches were broken off. That is, since individual Jews (not the whole Jewish people) were broken off and Gentiles grafted into their place, non-Jews should be humble toward the "natural branches." Gentile pride in having been joined to the "chosen people" is utterly inappropriate, particularly when directed against the original branches, the Jews. As Sha'ul wrote to the Gentiles, "You were...a wild olive tree."⁶⁸

¹⁸Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

Missler: Warning to the Gentiles (vv.18-24) [to US!]

NASB: "Do not be arrogant..." Root = Abraham. The root of the tree is the source of life and nourishment to all the branches, and Abraham is "the father of all who believe" (4:11-12, 16-17). So Gentile believers are linked to Abraham; in one sense they owe their salvation to him, not vice versa. [Origen: tried to make the church the root (?)]

This passage does not teach that the national promises to Israel have been abrogated and are now being fulfilled by the church. This idea, taught by amillennialists, is foreign to Paul's point, for he said Israel's fall is temporary. While believing Gentiles share in the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:3b) as Abraham's spiritual children (Gal. 3:8-9), they do not permanently replace Israel as the heirs of God's promises (Gen. 12:2-3; 15:18-21; 17:19-21; 22:15-18).

John 4:22 "Salvation is from the Jews."⁶⁹

⁶⁵ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁶⁶ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

⁶⁷ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁶⁸ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

⁶⁹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

McGee 18-19: The "olive tree" is a picture of the nation Israel, and the "wild olive" is the church. Everything you and I have is rooted in the fact that God called Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and that out of the nation Israel He brought Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Lord.⁷⁰

Guzik: Do not boast against the branches... you do not support the root, but the root supports you: Lest Gentiles think of themselves as superior to Jews, Paul also reminds them that the root supports the branches – not the other way around.⁷¹

ESV: 18–20 Gentile believers are warned against arrogance, for it is God's saving promises (the root), not their own goodness, that saved them. Thus Gentiles might be tempted with pride because God removed the Jewish branches from the olive tree and grafted them in instead. But this should provoke fear and awe (Gk. *phobeō*, “to be afraid, have profound respect and reverence, have fear of offending”), for the Jews were removed because they failed to believe and the Gentiles remain only because of their continued trust.⁷²

CJSB: Don't boast as if you were better than the branches! The Gentile believers' calling as grafted-in “wild branches” is not to be arrogant in their service of God, seeing it is not they that support the root but the root that supports them. It is nevertheless incumbent upon the Gentile believers to realize that the foundation of their faith is Jewish by definition.⁷³

19Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

Cf. Eph 2:11-22; 3:6 ff.

20Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

[A message to America!]

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

So as alien branches that have been, by God's grace, grafted into the natural olive tree (the Hebrew tree) that God has been cultivating for millennia, what should the attitude of gentile Christians be? Confident? Arrogant? Superior? Paul gives us that answer in verse 20: “Don't be arrogant; on the contrary be terrified!” Why should we be terrified?

McGee: The important thing is that they were set aside because of their unbelief. Oh, my Christian friend, you do not stand before God on your merit, your church membership, or your good life. You stand on one basis alone: your faith in Jesus Christ.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁷¹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

⁷² ESV Study Bible Notes

⁷³ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

⁷⁴ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

Guzik: Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith: In addition, any Gentile standing in the “tree” of God is there by faith only, not by works or merits. If Gentiles are unbelieving, they will be “cut off” just as much as unbelieving Israel was.⁷⁵

21For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee.

Missler: “If” = since; 1st class condition: assumed true.

“Thee” = Gentiles. Depends on your volition...

This section (vv. 11-21) explains the righteousness of God’s sovereign choice: Israel’s “fall” (11:11), “loss” (v. 12), and “rejection” (v. 15), for “the branches have been broken off” (v. 17) “because of unbelief” (v. 20); thus, If God is righteous in temporarily putting aside Israel as a whole for unbelief, He certainly could put aside the Gentiles for boasting and haughtiness.⁷⁶

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Verse 21: “For if God didn’t spare the natural branches, he certainly won’t spare you”. Gentile Believers, we are foreign objects unnaturally attached to the natural olive tree. If God was willing to prune off branches that grew naturally from the tree He had so carefully and lovingly cultivated for so many centuries, but some of those branches became diseased and stopped trusting, how much quicker will He be to cut off those formerly alien branches that show signs of the same disease of non-trust? It was God’s gift of mercy to the foreign branches, not to the natural tree, that we were grafted in.

McGee: Since God did not spare the nation Israel when they apostatized, the argument is that He will not spare an apostate church. I am more and more convinced that the church which is based on a philosophy or ritual or some sort of gyroflexion -- the type of church which was designated in the third chapter of the Book of Revelation as the church of Laodicea -- will go into the Great Tribulation. As Dr. George Gill used to say, "Some churches will meet on the Sunday morning after the Rapture, and they won't miss a member." That's Laodicea.

In contrast to this, He says to the church of Philadelphia, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation [that is, the Tribulation], which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10). He promised to keep from the Tribulation that church which has an open door before it and is getting out the Word of God. My friend, I belong to that church; I hope you do also. It is an invisible body of believers. This is the church that will be taken to meet Christ at the time of the Rapture, which precedes the Great Tribulation.⁷⁷

ESV: Fear is the appropriate response, for God will not spare anyone who does not continue to believe, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. Fear here does not refer to a paralyzing fear. Rather, it is the kind of humble fear that does not take God or salvation for granted, or think lightly of his displeasure.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

⁷⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁷⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁷⁸ ESV Study Bible Notes

²²Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

Missler: Paul here summarizes his whole discussion of God's sovereign choice in temporarily putting Israel aside corporately and proclaiming righteousness by faith to all mankind.

“Goodness”: *chrestotes*, moral goodness, integrity; kindness; also used of God in 2:4; Eph. 2:7; Titus 3:4.

“Severity”: *a apotomia*, sternness; only here in the New Testament (cf. the adverb *apotomos*, in 2 Cor 13:10 [“be harsh”] and Titus 1:13 [“sharply”]).

Why should God have more patience with us than He did with faithless Judaism?

God's continuing His goodness to the Gentiles depends on their continuing in His kindness. If Gentiles do not continue in God's kindness, they also will be cut off. This does not suggest that a Christian can lose his salvation; it refers to Gentiles as a whole (suggested by the sing. Thou) turning from the gospel much as Israel as a nation had done.⁷⁹

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Paul says in verse 22 that God has two sides of his character to be aware of: a side of kindness towards those who trust, and a side of severity for those who stop trusting. How do you stop trusting if you never trusted in the first place? I want to put another dent in the unscriptural doctrine of once-saved-always-saved. Here is yet another example of God warning Believers to maintain the trust that saved us or we'll be removed from God's covenants and destroyed. Question: who are the wild olives that are grafted into the cultivated tree? Are they any and all gentiles...pagans; or are they only Believing gentiles? It is self evident that they are only Believers. Why would God cut off non-Believing Jews who don't trust and replace them with non-Believing gentiles who don't trust? Besides as Paul says: the only reason gentiles are grafted in is because of our trust.

So, is the warning that we should maintain that trust or we'll be cut off the tree just a hypothetical situation that can't possibly happen? The once saved always saved doctrine says it is; says it can't happen. In fact once saved always saved adherents say that every warning in the New Testament (and there are several) of a Believer falling away or of the Lord refusing to recognize them, or blocking their entry into the Kingdom of God can't actually happen. So by that reasoning here in Romans 11 we have yet another and this time it is Paul who is making the hollow threat. If such a thing is impossible, why are we supposed to be terrified of being removed off the tree? Did we get there accidentally? Why are we to strive to remain in God's kindness through our trust if under no circumstance can we let go of our trust and then our salvation is revoked?

McGee: Restoration Of The Nation Israel (11:22-32)

Now we shall see that the restoration of the nation Israel will bring the greatest blessing. These are stern words. Paul calls upon the Gentiles to behold two examples. Rejected Israel reveals the severity of God, but to the Gentiles who have turned to God, the benevolent goodness of God is revealed. These two sides of God need to be revealed today: the judgment of God against the rejection of Christ against sin, and the grace of God to those that will trust Christ.

⁷⁹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Paul did not have the complete picture of the severity of God toward Israel. The history of Israel in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and all that succeeded it is a terrifying story. My friend, let's not trifle with the grace of God. It is grace which has brought us into the family of God and granted us so many privileges. After over nineteen hundred years the gentile church is as much a failure, if not more so, than Israel.⁸⁰

BKC: 11:22-24. In these verses Paul summarized his whole discussion of God's sovereign choice in temporarily putting Israel aside corporately and proclaiming righteousness by faith to all mankind. Consider (ide, "see, behold") therefore the kindness (*chrēstotēta*, "benevolence in action"; also used of God in 2:4; Eph. 2:7; Titus 3:4) and sternness of God. "Sternness" translates *apotomian*, used only here in the New Testament (cf. the adverb *apotomōs* in 2 Cor. 13:10 ["be harsh"] and Titus 1:13 ["sharply"]). God's sovereign choice involved severity toward the Jews who stumbled (fell; cf. Rom. 11:11) in unbelief and were hardened (v. 25), but that same decision displayed the goodness of God toward individual Gentiles. God's continuing His goodness to the Gentiles depends on their continuing in His kindness. If Gentiles do not continue in God's kindness, they also will be cut off. This does not suggest that a Christian can lose his salvation; it refers to Gentiles as a whole (suggested by the sing. you) turning from the gospel much as Israel as a nation had done.

Conversely for the people of Israel, if they do not persist (lit., "continue") in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. At issue is not God's ability but God's decision. God sovereignly chose to put Israel aside corporately because of unbelief and to extend righteousness by faith to everyone. This demonstrates His decision to graft Gentiles into the spiritual stock of Abraham (cf. 4:12, 16-17; Gal. 3:14).

Obviously, therefore, if the unbelief which caused Israel's rejection by God is removed, God is able and will graft the people of Israel (the natural branches) back into the spiritual stock to which they belong (their own olive tree). After all, as Paul wrote earlier, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:13).

The "olive tree" is not the church; it is the spiritual stock of Abraham. Believing Gentiles are included in that sphere of blessing so that in the Church Age both Jews and Gentiles are in Christ's body (Eph. 2:11-22; 3:6). Yet someday Israel as a whole will turn to Christ (as Paul discussed in Rom. 11:25-27). This passage does not teach that the national promises to Israel have been abrogated and are now being fulfilled by the church. This idea, taught by *amillennialists*, is foreign to Paul's point, for he said Israel's fall is temporary. While believing Gentiles share in the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:3b) as Abraham's spiritual children (Gal. 3:8-9), they do not permanently replace Israel as the heirs of God's promises (Gen. 12:2-3; 15:18-21; 17:19-21; 22:15-18).⁸¹

Guzik: Consider the goodness and severity of God: Paul stresses the need to continue in His goodness; not in the sense of a salvation by works, but continuing in God's grace and goodness to us – a relationship of continual abiding. This idea of a continual abiding in the "tree" is also expressed in John 15:1-8.

"The conditional clause in this verse, if you continue in His goodness, is a reminder that there is no security in the bond of the gospel apart from perseverance. There is no such thing as

⁸⁰ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁸¹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

continuance in the favour of God in spite of apostasy; God's saving embrace and endurance are correlative." (Murray)⁸²

ESV: 22–24 The Gentile readers must contemplate God's kindness and severity. His severity has been the portion of Jews who have not believed, but his kindness has been poured out on the Gentiles. Still, they must persevere in faith. Otherwise, they too will be judged as unbelievers. Furthermore, God will graft back onto the olive tree any Jews who put their faith in Christ. Paul argues from the lesser to the greater. If God grafted onto the olive tree Gentiles, who are the wild branches, then surely he can and will graft back onto the olive tree Jews, who are the original branches from the tree.⁸³

23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.

Missler: "They" =Israel

As Paul wrote earlier, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:13).⁸⁴

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

But then comes the part that no doubt Paul was so very anxious to get to. He says this in verses 23 and 24. Paul says that those hardened Jews (the cut-off branches) WILL be grafted back into their OWN tree if they will finally trust. So the hardening that God put upon His people will end, and they will be offered their place back as a branch on the cultivated olive tree because it is their tree in the first place!

Stony hearts turned to soft hearts that trust. Jews that had their hearts hardened towards Messiah finally become Believers and are saved. Where have we heard this?

Ezekiel 36:24-28 CJB 24 For I will take you from among the nations, gather you from all the countries, and return you to your own soil. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit inside you; I will take the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put my Spirit inside you and cause you to live by my laws, respect my rulings and obey them. 28 You will live in the land I gave to your ancestors. You will be my people, and I will be your God.

McGee: Since God accepted Gentiles who had no merit, surely God can restore Israel who likewise has no merit.

"Again" is the key word. God will again restore Israel. The Old Testament makes it very clear that Israel is going to turn to God again. As an example, read Jeremiah 23:3-8, which is one of the many remarkable prophecies of the restoration of Israel. Zechariah speaks of this: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in

⁸² https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

⁸³ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁸⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

bitterness for his firstborn" (Zech. 12:10). This will be the great Day of Atonement. They will turn to God in repentance, and God will save them just as He saves us -- by His marvelous, infinite mercy and grace.⁸⁵

Guzik: God is able to graft them in again: And, if Israel was “cut off” because of their unbelief, they can be grafted in again if they do not continue in unbelief.

“Evidently some Gentile believers were tempted to think that there was no future for Israel. She had rejected the gospel and it had now passed to the Gentiles; Israel was finished, rejected, cast off. God had chosen them instead. It is this kind of pride that Paul is opposing.” (Morris)⁸⁶

²⁴For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree?

Missler: “Much More”! [Normally a branch of a cultivated olive tree is grafted into a wild olive tree, the opposite of what Paul spoke of here. But he knew that grafting the wild into the cultivated was not the norm (though it was done), for later he said it was “contrary to nature”]⁸⁷

McGee: Paul continues the illustration of the olive tree. The olive tree is Israel with Abraham as the root. Some of the branches were cut off. The nation, as such, was rejected. God grafted in Gentiles, but not by their becoming Jewish proselytes, which would mean they would have to adopt the Old Testament ritual. Rather, He cut off Israel and grafted in the church -- including both Jew and Gentile -- directly and immediately upon Abraham by faith. If God could and did do that, it is reasonable to conclude that He can and will take the natural branches and graft them in again. In other words, He will not cast Israel away permanently.⁸⁸

Guzik: How much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? If the Gentiles seemed to “graft” into God’s “tree” easily, we know it won’t be hard for God to graft the natural branches back into the tree. We can also assume that the natural branches will have the potential to bear much fruit.⁸⁹

CJSB: For, brothers, I want you to understand this truth. The word for points forward to the reason why Sha’ul has used the olive tree metaphor (vv. 17–24). To Sha’ul, this is a truth, “which God formerly concealed but has now revealed.” It is a mystery. In this, both the Gentile believer and the Messianic Jew must grasp the fullness of their individual callings by God.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁸⁶ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

⁸⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁸⁸ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁸⁹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

⁹⁰ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

²⁵For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

Missler: General Review

The destiny of Israel—as declared by God Himself—is, strangely, a controversy that divides the denominational churches from the Biblical view. [Study carefully yourself to resolve this in your own mind; it is critical if you are to understand the times in which we live.]

The Climactic “Until”

“Mystery”= a truth previously unrevealed (and therefore unknown) which is now revealed and publicly proclaimed

“Blindness,” hardness: *porosis*

- 1) the covering with a callus
- 2) obtrusiveness of mental discernment, dulled \ perception
- 3) the mind of one has been blunted; of stubbornness, obduracy

“Hardening” here (*porosis* (obtrusiveness, dullness) differs from the verb *skleruno* used of Pharaoh (9:18) to speak of stubbornness.

Blindness declared by Christ in Luke 19:42. But not forever...

“Until”!

3 “Until’s” of Israel: 3 conditions for restoration

- 1) Matthew 23:(37-) 39: 1st condition for restoration: “Until they say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord...” Isaiah 53 may be sung...
- 2) Luke 21:24: 2nd condition: “Times of the Gentiles” are fulfilled. Dan 2 - 7.
- 3) Romans 11:25: 3rd condition: “Fullness of Gentiles” brought in.

“Fullness of Gentiles” = Fullness: *pleroma* 1) that which is (has been) filled; (a maritime term, of a ship that is fully manned with sailors, rowers, and soldiers, etc.)

There is a fullness for Israel (Rom. 11:12) and a fullness for the Gentiles. God is now “taking from the Gentiles a people for Himself” (Acts 15:14).

In Romans 11:25 are two specific facts about Israel’s hardening (cf. vv. 7-8):

- 1) it is partial, “in part” (because throughout this time “there is a remnant chosen by grace,” v. 5);
- 2) it is temporary (because it will end when God’s sovereignly chosen number of Gentiles has been saved).

[A Provocative Conjecture: The “fullness” indicates a specific number for completion. Satan must know that such a finite specific number exists. For two thousand years he has been in shock treatment: every time someone puts their trust in Christ, the divine counter increments by one. And each time, Satan doesn’t know whether that increment renders it “full;” and the Father says to the Son, “Go get them.” Are you the one holding us all up? ...]

“Come in”: where? Closes the interval predicted in Daniel 9:26.⁹¹

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

As we begin with verse 25 of Romans chapter 11, it is quite clear that Paul has a troubling concern on his mind. It is that gentiles may misunderstand, even exaggerate, their place in the Kingdom of God because of their faith in Christ. It has always been so beginning with Abraham that gentiles were invited to worship Israel’s God and to place themselves under the covenants

⁹¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

that Yehoveh made with Israel. However, until the advent of Christ it was assumed by all Hebrews and even the gentiles that a true conversion was needed for a gentile to join Israel.

In ancient times, especially, gods were identified to specific nations. There was usually one god that was considered as the founding god of a nation. The relationship between a particular god and his nation was so intertwined that it was not unusual to call a nation by its national name and alternatively by the name of its god. The nation of Assyria is a good example as it is prominent in the Bible. Assyria's founding god is Asshur. Thus, in the Old Testament it is common to refer at times to Assyria as Asshur. So, if a person from another nation wishes to worship the god of Assyria, Asshur, then it was assumed that the person would become a national Assyrian. Otherwise their thought process was: 'what could possibly be the point of being part of one nation, but worshipping the founding god of an entirely different nation'? No benefit could come from such a devotion. The people of Israel, of course, viewed such a prospect the same way.

Therefore, since Yehoveh was the founding god of Israel it made no sense for a person of another nation (a gentile) to worship the Hebrew God, the God of Israel, as their god. So, if for whatever reason a gentile decided to devote himself to Yehoveh, then it was self-evident that this gentile should convert and become an Israelite (in Christ's day, a Jew); both sides believed in this protocol as a given. It is important to understand that this was human thought and human custom that was being observed; it was not God's way. Yet God seemed to permit this misperception to continue among mankind, even among His own people, until the right moment in history arrived when it was time to take His people back to school. That moment was the advent of Messiah Yeshua.

It was Paul whom Yeshua elected as the school master. His job was to teach Jew and gentile that nationality, ethnicity, race, and gender were irrelevant when it came to worshipping the true God and to attaining eternal life. It was especially the case when it came to trusting in the Jewish Messiah whom God sent to deliver humankind from their sins. As it is easy to imagine, gentiles, the outsiders so-to-speak, were more receptive to such a notion of inclusion without conversion than were Jews, the insiders. This set the Jewish Paul against most of his brethren as he fought against requiring gentiles to be circumcised to follow Yeshua since circumcision was the official right-of-passage for a gentile to convert and become a national Jew.

Because as humans it can be hard for us to view most anything through other than the lens of our own interests and experiences, Paul's defense of gentiles gaining eternal life and forgiveness of sins through Israel's Messiah, but without conversion, was seen as a combination of theological heresy and a kind of national treason by the Jews. Gentiles on the other hand apparently often saw it as God's favor being withdrawn from Israel in order to be placed upon gentiles. What did some gentiles conclude from this? Gentiles must be better than Jews in some ways, otherwise why would the God of the Jews start including gentiles? Paul seemed to believe this attitude of gentiles was not only present in the City of Rome, the intended audience of his letter to the Romans; it also portended bad things for the Body of Christ in general as the influx of gentiles to the faith increased. So throughout the Book of Romans Paul has been building a case to explain to the Jews why the gentiles belong; and to tell the gentiles not to get big-headed about it, hoping that gets him ahead of the curve in what he sees as a looming problem.

I have digressed from time to time to describe how the early Church Fathers perceived what Paul was trying to explain in his letters, and how it is to be taken especially by gentile Christians. Little could be more important to the fundamental doctrines that drive Christianity today than what the early Church Fathers decided. But as I have shown you in previous lessons, they shared

no universal viewpoint on much of anything especially through perhaps the 5th century. Nonetheless, what we do find is a trend from the earliest of the Church Fathers (a little before 100 A.D.) to the later ones (up to the late 700's A.D.), to embrace the very thing Paul warned against here in Roman 11. That is, the Church Fathers eventually saw faith in Yeshua as not only an exclusively gentile faith, but also something that Jews were unworthy of participating in. Even in the earlier times there was a disagreement among the Church Fathers of just who ought to be granted membership into Christianity, and much of that was based on the place of the Law of Moses in the life of a Believer. Naturally, the more gentile in nature that a Church Father saw the Church, the more he pushed against the Law of Moses. A good example would be that of Gennadius of Constantinople. He lived in the mid-400's A.D. In his entry into the Pauline Commentary of the Greek Church, he said this:

“The apostle (Paul) expressed himself in this way...because he wants to show that the law and grace are completely incompatible and that the two of them can never go together. Of necessity, one must drive the other out.”

So here we have essentially a declaration of war from the Church Father Gennadius setting Christianity against the Law of Moses, and thus having the effect of setting gentiles against Jews. Another and different Church Father, Augustine, who lived just a couple of decades before Gennadius, had an entirely different viewpoint. In his homily called *The Spirit and the Letter*, Augustine said this:

“Grace is given not because we have done good works but in order that we may have the power to do them; not because we have fulfilled The Law but in order that we may be able to fulfill it”. So Augustine agrees with Paul and with Christ that the purpose of salvation through grace is so that we can be properly devoted to God's commandments and, by means of the Holy Spirit, enabled to do them in the spirit that God intended. Clearly this was an inviting message to the Jewish people and not one that pitted gentile against Jew or elevated gentile above Jew by dismissing the Law of Moses as an enemy of Christianity.

Therefore, it is with a breath of fresh air that we read of yet another Church Father, Pelagius, who although championing some doctrines that we today would find most heretical, nonetheless says in his Commentary on the Book of Romans specifically regarding Romans 11:25:

“All that follows is designed to prevent the gentiles from being filled with pride towards the Jews. It is a secret unknown to mankind why the gentiles were saved, because Israel's blindness in fact furnished the occasion for their salvation. The blindness continued until the Jews saw that the gentiles were being saved, since all were called to salvation”.

So what we find is that by the early 400's A.D. there was a growing schism within the Church as to the place of The Law of Moses and to the place of Jews. It is rather ironic that in his era Paul seeks to, somehow, try to fit gentiles into their proper role within this religion of the Jews that believes upon Yeshua of Nazareth as their Messiah; but within 3 more centuries the Church had many leaders who were not sure if it was possible, or even desirable, to fit Jews into Christianity. Within a few more centuries after that, the predominant view of the Church leadership was that Jews not only had no place within the Body of Christ as worshippers of Yeshua, but also that they really had no place on this earth living in the same locations where Christians might reside.

Though Paul was not a prophet in the same sense as Isaiah or Elijah or John, he indeed saw the future truly based on what he saw starting to happen in his day.

By beginning verse 25 employing the word “for”, the idea is that Paul is going to give his readers the reason for his olive-tree analogy. Here, when he uses the term brothers (notice:

brothers, not brethren), brothers is meant to indicate fellow Believers: Jews and gentiles. The CJB uses a dynamic translation of this verse because it revolves around the Greek word *musterion* that is usually translated into English as mystery. As Dr. David Stern, the creator of the CJB, explains it, he does this because the English word mystery as used in modern times means something different than what the Greek word *musterion* meant to impart 2000 years ago. It does not mean mystery in the sense of a riddle, nor does it mean mystery in the pagan religious sense that is expressed in the term Mystery Babylon Religions. Rather, says Dr. Stern, it means it more as a truth that God holds intimately secret unto Himself, which at the proper moment He will reveal it. The Lord has chosen Paul to be the messenger of this secret truth and it is this: by all human logic, and from a human fairness standpoint, one would reckon that the entire nation of the Jews would be the first ones to be saved because of Christ. After all, they were given God's Word, they produced both Mediators that God would ever give us (Moses and then Yeshua), and the Jews were the first to hear the Gospel and given the Holy Spirit, and it was especially aimed at them.

Romans 1:16 CJB 16 For I am not ashamed of the Good News, since it is God's powerful means of bringing salvation to everyone who keeps on trusting, to the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile.

Still aiming his words mostly at gentile Believers, Paul explains why God is revealing this *musterion* (this truth that had been concealed but is now revealed) at this time and it is "So that you won't imagine you know more than you actually do". That is, so that gentiles don't misunderstand God's purpose and motive for including them in His salvation plan at this time, Paul will explain the situation. And what is the reason for including gentiles?

Paul reveals the three elements that make up this amazing truth that has remained hidden for thousands of years. First, it is that part of Israel has become hardened. The words that stoniness "has come upon" Israel puts the onus on God, and not the people, as the source of the hardening. On the other hand, God hardened those particular Israelites (Jews) because they freely chose not to accept Yeshua as their Messiah. The stone-like hardness of mind against Yeshua is, however, not total. Since the moment Christ revealed Himself there have always been Jews who believed. So the hardening is a divine hardening, and not all of Israel has been affected by it, but the largest part has. Yet there is a remnant that was not hardened, and that remnant is the many thousands of Jewish Believers in Yeshua.

The second element is that this hardening will remain in place UNTIL the gentile world enters its fullness. The Greek word that is being translated as fullness is *pleroma* and it usually indicates the wholeness, the completeness, of something. It comes from the exact same root as the Greek word *pleroo* (*pleroo*, *pleroma*). Why is that important? Because it is also one of the key words of Matthew 5:17 – 19 when Christ says: 17 "Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete. The English word complete is the Greek *pleroo*, which means to fill to the fullest or to bring something to its full wholeness. Can you now see how this relates? Christ came to bring the Law to a complete wholeness in the same way that God intends on bringing gentiles to a complete wholeness (obviously to complete does not mean to terminate unless God's goal is to terminate gentiles as well as the Law). But what exactly does "entering their fullness" mean as it concerns gentiles? It means that when God determines that the gentile world has been evangelized fully enough, and gentile humans have been given sufficient opportunity to make a decision for or against Christ, then the gentiles have entered their fullness; there are no more that will be saved, at least under the current

circumstances. It is upon that determination that God will begin to supernaturally remove the stoniness of heart that non-Believing Jews have.

The third element is that the purpose of elements one and two are to bring about the third element, which is to save all Israel. This path to a saving righteousness for all Israel that seems so convoluted (it begins with Jews, then includes gentiles, then goes back to the Jews) is in fact the path that God has determined. But what does “all Israel” mean? Does it mean every last Israelite? I think it has a meaning on two levels. The first level is that throughout the Bible “all Israel” is synonymous with “the whole house of Israel”. And “the whole house of Israel” is referring to the fact that Israel has always been a divided family. Historically it is represented by two socio/political factions: a group of tribes led by Judah, and a second group of tribes led by Ephraim. The Bible refers to these two groups of tribes as the two Houses of Israel: the House of Judah and the House of Ephraim. The House of Judah is what we know today as “the Jews”. The House of Ephraim is better known as “The 10 Lost Tribes”. What Paul is revealing is the “how” of what Ezekiel reveals in his famous prophecy of the two sticks in Ezekiel 37. We won’t read the entire chapter, but here is the final part of it so that we can see the relationship between this mystery that Paul is revealing and the mystery that Ezekiel is revealing hundreds of years earlier.

Ezekiel 37:15-28 CJB 15 The word of ADONAI came to me: 16 "You, human being, take one stick and write on it, 'For Y'hudah and those joined with him [among] the people of Isra'el.' Next, take another stick and write on it, 'For Yosef, the stick of Efrayim, and all the house of Isra'el who are joined with him.' 17 Finally, bring them together into a single stick, so that they become one in your hand. 18 When your people ask you what all this means, 19 tell them that Adonai ELOHIM says this: 'I will take the stick of Yosef, which is in the hand of Efrayim, together with the tribes of Isra'el who are joined with him, and put them together with the stick of Y'hudah and make them a single stick, so that they become one in my hand.' 20 The sticks on which you write are to be in your hand as they watch. 21 Then say to them that Adonai ELOHIM says: 'I will take the people of Isra'el from among the nations where they have gone and gather them from every side and bring them back to their own land. 22 I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Isra'el; and one king will be king for all of them. They will no longer be two nations, and they will never again be divided into two kingdoms. 23 "'They will never again defile themselves with their idols, their detestable things, or any of their transgressions; but I will save them from all the places where they have been living and sinning; and I will cleanse them, so that they will be my people, and I will be their God. 24 My servant David will be king over them, and all of them will have one shepherd; they will live by my rulings and keep and observe my regulations. 25 They will live in the land I gave to Ya'akov my servant, where your ancestors lived; they will live there- they, their children, and their grandchildren, forever; and David my servant will be their leader forever. 26 I will make a covenant of peace with them, an everlasting covenant. I will give to them, increase their numbers, and set my sanctuary among them forever. 27 My home will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. 28 The nations will know that I am ADONAI, who sets Isra'el apart as holy, when my sanctuary is with them forever.'"

So, my point is that since Paul is applying what he says to “all Israel”, then “all Israel” has to mean, at the least, both houses of Israel. But that can’t happen until the two houses are rejoined. And that happens either after or coincidentally with, the time when the fullness of the gentiles has been reached. We read in Ezekiel 37 about the reuniting of the two houses, and the end of their ungodliness, and of their being ruled by “David” FOREVER. David is referring to the

Messiah from the family of David (David had been dead for 300 years by the time of Jeremiah, so obviously he meant the royal descendants of David; not David himself). And no mortal king rules forever; but Yeshua will. So it is clear who Ezekiel is referring to as the “forever” ruler of an undivided Israel.

As it so happens the two houses of Israel are in process of reuniting as we speak. Thousands of members of the “10 Lost Tribes” are returning and reuniting with their brother tribe Judah (the Jews) in the Holy Land and I have personally witnessed it. Most mission organizations will confess that for all practical purpose our entire planet has had the Word of God sent out to it. Not 100%, but I don’t think that is the actual requirement that every last living gentile will personally hear the Gospel before the prophesied “fullness of the gentiles” has been reached. The Bible simply doesn’t deal by such standards.

But I spoke of “all Israel” as also having a meaning on a second level. For sure it means what I just explained to you. But what it also likely means is similar to what “fullness of the gentiles” means. That is, all Israel means that the full number of Jews (Hebrews, actually) who will ever believe has been attained (according to God’s calculation). But the bottom line is this: all Israel will NOT be saved until God determines that the fullness of the gentiles has occurred.

As the proof text for what he is asserting, in verses 26 & 27 Paul combines two passages from the Book of Isaiah: Isaiah 59:20, 21 and Isaiah 27:9. For the sake of time we won’t go to these passages in Isaiah and read the full context; however, the gist of it is that these are dealing with the End of Days. So the idea is that God is intervening in Israel’s affairs at the End of Days and is Himself taking away sin from Jacob (from Israel). Paul is saying that these Scriptures are speaking of that time when the divine hardening of Israel comes to an end as Israel accepts their Redeemer, their Messiah; but this only happens as the End of Days has begun.

McGee: "The fulness of the Gentiles" began with the calling out of the church. "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name" (Acts 15:14). It will continue until the rapture of the church. Blindness and hardening of Israel will continue as long as the church is present in the world.

The word mystery needs a word of explanation. In the ancient world of Paul's day there were mystery religions. Today it applies in a popular way to a story that has an unrevealed plot or person. It is used in Scripture in neither of these ways. In the New Testament the word is used to refer to that which had been concealed but is now revealed. The mystery here is the identification of the fullness of the Gentiles, which was not a subject of revelation in the Old Testament.⁹²

BKC: 11:25-27. Israel's corporate stumbling, which is temporary, not permanent, is called a mystery. In Scripture a mystery is not a truth difficult to understand, but a truth previously unrevealed (and therefore unknown) which is now revealed and publicly proclaimed (cf. Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26; at Matt. 13:10-16, see the chart that lists NT mysteries). Paul wanted to make sure his Gentile readers knew about the mystery concerning Israel in God's sovereign choice. God's purpose was so that you may not be conceited (lit., "wise in yourselves"). God's sovereign plan to put Israel aside temporarily in order to show grace to Gentiles is no basis for conceit on the part of the Gentiles; it is designed to display further the glory of God.

God purposed that some from all nations should by faith receive the righteousness provided by grace. In order to achieve this goal Israel's relationship as God's Chosen People was rescinded for a time and Israel is now experiencing a hardening in part until the full number (plērōma,

⁹² Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

"fullness") of the Gentiles has come in. There is a fullness for Israel (Rom. 11:12) and a fullness for the Gentiles. God is now "taking from the Gentiles a people for Himself" (Acts 15:14). In Romans 11:25 are two specific facts about Israel's hardening (cf. vv. 7-8): (a) it is partial, "in part" (because throughout this time "there is a remnant chosen by grace," v. 5), and (b) it is temporary (because it will end when God's sovereignly chosen number of Gentiles has been saved).

"Hardening" is *pōrōsis* ("hardening, dulling"); it differs from the verb *sklērynei* ("hardens") used of Pharaoh (9:18) and the noun *sklērotēta* ("stubbornness," lit., "hardening," 2:5). The first noun (*pōrōsis*) refers to dullness, the second suggests stubbornness.

After "the fullness of the Gentiles" (11:25, kjv) the partial hardening of Israel will be removed and all Israel will be saved, that is, "delivered" (in the OT "saved" often means "delivered") from the terrible Tribulation by the Messiah, the Deliverer. To confirm this, Paul quoted from Isaiah 59:20-21 and 27:9. The statement, "All Israel will be saved" does not mean that every Jew living at Christ's return will be regenerated. Many of them will not be saved, as seen by the fact that the judgment of Israel, to follow soon after the Lord's return, will include the removal of Jewish rebels (Ezek. 20:34-38). Following this judgment God will then remove godlessness and sins from the nation as He establishes His New Covenant with regenerate Israel (cf. Jer. 31:33-34).⁹³

Guzik: Lest you be wise in your own opinion: This is a warning to take this soberly. Christians must not be ignorant of this mystery.

Blindness in part has happened to Israel: Paul summarizes his point from Romans 11:11-24. God's purpose in allowing blindness in part to come upon Israel is so that the fullness of the Gentiles can come in.

In part has the idea of "temporary"; Israel's blindness is temporary. "One day the Jews will realize their blindness and folly. They'll accept Jesus Christ, and the glorious national restoration of these people will bring in the Kingdom Age." (Smith)

Until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in: At that time, God will once again turn the attention of His plan of the ages specifically on Israel again, so that all Israel will be saved. God's plan of the ages does not set its attention on everyone equally through all ages.⁹⁴

ESV: Paul discloses a mystery to the Gentiles to prevent them from being proud. The word "mystery" does not necessarily refer to something puzzling or difficult to grasp, but to something that was previously hidden and is now revealed. The mystery here has three elements: (1) at this time in salvation history the majority of Israel has been hardened; (2) during this same time the full number of Gentiles is being saved; and (3) God will do a new work in the future in which he will save all "Israel" (v. 26).⁹⁵

⁹³ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁹⁴ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

⁹⁵ ESV Study Bible Notes

²⁶And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

Missler: Prediction of Post-Rapture Restoration

After “the fullness of the Gentiles” the partial hardening of Israel will be removed and “all Israel will be saved,” that is, “delivered” (in the OT “saved” often means “delivered”) from the terrible Tribulation by the Messiah, “the Deliverer.”

To confirm this, Paul quoted from Isaiah 59:20-21 and 27:9. The statement, “All Israel will be saved” does not mean that every Jew living at Christ’s return will be regenerated. Many of them will not be saved, as seen by the fact that the judgment of Israel, to follow soon after the Lord’s return, will include the removal of Jewish rebels (Ezek. 20:34-38). National Israel: 75 ref’s in 73 verses...⁹⁶

McGee 26-27: When Paul says "all Israel shall be saved," he does not mean every individual Israelite will be saved. It is the nation he has before us in this chapter. In every age, only a remnant is saved. The quotation Paul uses is from Isaiah 59:20 in the Old Testament: "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord." The message to the individual is that he will have to "turn from transgression" to the Lord. There will be a remnant that will turn to Him. All of them will be saved. He speaks of the saved remnant as the nation Israel.

There is always only a remnant that is saved. There was a remnant in Elijah's day; there was a remnant in David's day; there was a remnant in Paul's day; there is a remnant in our day; and there will be a remnant during the Great Tribulation period.⁹⁷

Guzik: All Israel will be saved: This all Israel is not “spiritual Israel.” It isn’t “spiritual Israel” in Romans 11:25, because that Israel is spiritually blind. Therefore, we shouldn’t regard it as spiritual Israel in Romans 11:26.

There is a distinction between national or ethnic Israel and spiritual Israel. Paul makes this clear in Galatians 3:7 and other passages. Nevertheless, God still has a purpose and a plan for ethnic Israel and will bring salvation to them.

We also know this is not “spiritual Israel” because Paul says this is a mystery – and it is no mystery that spiritual Israel will be saved.

Harrison on all Israel: “It was the view of Calvin, for example, that the entire company of the redeemed, both Jew and Gentile, is intended. But Israel has not been used of Gentiles in these chapters, and it is doubtful that such is the case in any of Paul’s writings.”

“It is impossible to entertain an exegesis which understands Israel here in a different sense from Israel in verse 25.” (Bruce)

Will be saved: This states clearly for us that God is not finished with Israel as a nation or a distinct ethnic group. Though God has turned the focus of His saving mercies away from Israel specifically and onto the Gentiles generally, He will turn it back again.

This simple passage refutes those who insist that God is forever done with Israel as a people and that the Church is the New Israel and inherits every promise ever made to national and ethnic Israel of the Old Testament.

⁹⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁹⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

We are reminded of the enduring character of the promises made to national and ethnic Israel (Genesis 13:15 and 17:7-8). God is not “finished” with Israel, and Israel is not “spiritualized” as the church.

While we see and rejoice in a continuity of God’s work throughout all His people through all ages, we also see a distinction between Israel and the Church – a distinction that Paul is sensitive to here.

All Israel will be saved: This does not mean there will be a time when every last person of Jewish descent will be saved. Instead, this is a time when Israel as a whole will be a saved people, and when the nation as a whole (especially its leadership) embraces Jesus Christ as Messiah.

Even as the apostasy of Israel did not extend to every last Jew, so the salvation of Israel will not extend to every last Jew; Paul is speaking of the “mass” of Jews when he says all Israel. “All Israel is a recurring expression in Jewish literature, where it need not mean ‘every Jew without a single exception’, but ‘Israel as a whole.’ ” (Bruce)

And, when all Israel will be saved, they will be saved through embracing Jesus Christ as Messiah – as unlikely as this seems. They are not saved with some peculiar “Jewish” salvation.

The Bible indicates this is a necessary condition for the return of Jesus Christ (Matthew 23:39, Zechariah 12:10-11). Jesus will not return again until God turns the focus of His saving mercies on Israel again, and Israel responds to God through Jesus Christ.

The Deliverer will come out of Zion: The quotations from Isaiah show that God still has a redeeming work to accomplish with Israel, and that it will not be left undone.⁹⁸

ESV: in this way all Israel will be saved. Various interpreters have claimed that Paul is speaking of: (1) the salvation of the church of Jesus Christ, both Jews and Gentiles, throughout history; or (2) the saving of a remnant of Jews throughout history; or (3) the salvation of the end-time generation of the Jewish people in the future. The first view is unlikely since throughout chs. 9-11 Israel and Gentiles are distinct ethnic entities. Furthermore, in 11:25 Israel refers to ethnic Israel, and it is difficult to see how the referent could suddenly change in v. 26. Finally, v. 28 indicates that ethnic Israel is still distinguished from Gentiles, for “they” in v. 28 clearly refers to ethnic Israel. The third view, that Paul refers to the salvation of Israel at the end of history, seems most likely because: (1) it fits with the promises of God’s future work in vv. 12 and 15; (2) it is difficult to see how the salvation of a remnant of Jews all through history would qualify as a mystery; (3) the future salvation of ethnic Israel at the end of history accords with the climactic character of this passage; and (4) it demonstrates finally and fully how God is faithful to fulfill his saving promises to his people (9:6). “All Israel” does not necessarily refer to every single Jewish person but to a very large number, at least the majority of Jews. The Deliverer coming from Zion probably refers to Christ (cf. 1 Thess. 1:10), suggesting that the Jews will be saved near or at the second coming.⁹⁹

FCSBN: All Israel will be saved. This is a controversial statement among theologians, one about which there is little agreement. The rhetorical purpose of Paul’s words was to encourage Gentile followers of Christ to act humbly toward non-believing Jews. The verse, however, seems to open the door for Jewish inclusion in God’s plan of salvation and restoration, though they currently reject Christ. At the same time, Paul also stated that salvation, or reconciliation, comes through

⁹⁸ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

⁹⁹ ESV Study Bible Notes

the acceptance of Christ (see, for example, Ro 3:22–23; 5:10–11; 10:9–13). In Paul’s view, Israel is hardened or calloused until God accomplishes his mysterious purposes among the Gentiles. But Paul did not elaborate on how exactly Israel’s salvation is accomplished. Paul might have been drawing on Isaiah’s images of God restoring and gathering Israel back to a fruitful state after a period of punishment (see, for example, Isa 27:6–12).¹⁰⁰

CJSB: 26–27 In this way that all Isra’el will be saved. Sha’ul combines two passages of Isaiah that speak of Isra’el in the End of Days, that is, in messianic times. The passages are appropriate, since his objective in chs. 9–11 is to show that despite appearances to the contrary, God’s promises will not fail to be fulfilled.¹⁰¹

27For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

Missler: Following this judgment God will then remove godlessness and sins from the nation as He establishes His New Covenant with regenerate Israel (cf. Jer. 31:33-34).¹⁰²

ESV: when I take away their sins. The salvation of Israel fits with God's covenantal promise to save his people and to forgive their sins.¹⁰³

28As concerning the gospel, *they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.*

Missler: Here Paul summarized God’s dealings with Israel and with the Gentiles: In order for God to bring “the gospel” to Gentiles He had to deal with Israel corporately as “enemies.” But in relation to God’s election of Abraham and His covenant with him and the patriarchs, Israel is beloved. Because God chose Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (cf. 9:6-13), He loves the nation and will carry through on His promises.

This is another reason Israel’s hardening must be temporary (cf. 11:15, 22-25) and she must finally be saved corporately: God chose her.¹⁰⁴

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Verse 28 continues with the theme that is being directed towards gentile Believers. Paul says that as regards the Gospel, the ONLY reason that God has acted as He has towards Israel (hardening them) is for the sake of the gentiles. But at the same time Israel remains loved by God for the sake of the Hebrew Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). So, Israel hasn’t necessarily merited the hardening any more than they have merited the love. Thus gentiles shouldn’t look at the Jews and think that their hardening is a divine punishment, anymore than their election and the love God gives them is a reward. Israel is a tool for redemption; a tool that can be used by the Divine Craftsman a number of different ways to achieve His purpose.

¹⁰⁰ First-Century Study Bible Notes

¹⁰¹ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

¹⁰² Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹⁰³ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹⁰⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

McGee 28-29: In other words, with reference to the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but with reference to the election, they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts of grace and the calling of God are without repentance -- without a change of mind. Paul is summing up the preceding discussion. There have been two lines of thought which are seemingly in conflict and contradictory, although both are true. In the first place, Israel is regarded as an enemy for the sake of the Gentiles -- that is, so the gospel can go to the Gentiles. On the other hand, they are beloved for the sake of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore, a Christian cannot indulge in any form of anti-Semitism -- that is a point I have made before, and continue to make it. The failure of Israel and our failure likewise do not alter the plan and purpose of God. "The gifts" are not natural gifts, but the word has to do with grace.

The "calling" is not an invitation, but it is the effectual calling of God, which is "without repentance." In other words, God is not asking even repentance from an unsaved person. The "calling of God" does not require any human movement. From God's viewpoint it is without man's repentance or change of mind. Some folk think they have to shed tears in order to be saved. Now certainly the shedding of tears could be a by-product of an emotional person who turns to Christ, but the tears have nothing in the world to do with your salvation. It is your faith in Christ that saves you. And neither is your faith meritorious. It is Christ who is meritorious. Your faith enables you to lay hold of Him.¹⁰⁵

BKC: 11:28-29. Here Paul summarized God's dealings with Israel and with the Gentiles. In order for God to bring the gospel to Gentiles He had to deal with Israel corporately as enemies. But in relation to God's choice (election) of Abraham and His covenant with him and the patriarchs, Israel is beloved. Because God chose Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (cf. 9:6-13), He loves the nation and will carry through on His promises. This is another reason Israel's hardening must be temporary (cf. 11:15, 22-25) and she must finally be saved corporately: God chose her. And God's gifts and His call are irrevocable (lit., "for not repented of are the grace-gifts and the calling of God"). He does not revoke what He has given or whom He has chosen ("call" means election and salvation; cf. 1:6; 8:30).¹⁰⁶

Guzik: Concerning the gospel... concerning the election: Even though it seemed that in Paul's day the Jews were enemies of God and were against Jesus, they are still beloved – if for no other reason, then for the sake of the fathers (the patriarchs of the Old Testament).

Of course, they are loved for more than the sake of the fathers, but that by itself would be enough.¹⁰⁷

ESV: for your sake. The unbelief of Israel has benefited the Gentiles, i.e., this is the period of history in which Gentiles are being saved, while most of Israel remains in unbelief. But God's electing promise given to their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be fulfilled in the future.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁰⁶ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

¹⁰⁷ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

¹⁰⁸ ESV Study Bible Notes

²⁹For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.

Missler: “Without repentance” = irrevocable. He does not revoke what He has given or whom He has chosen. [What about apostasy? 2 Peter & Jude...] ¹⁰⁹

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Then we hit another of those verses that makes me slap my forehead and wonder how in the world so many can get it so wrong when the words are so clear and precise? Paul says that God’s gifts and his calling are irrevocable. Some abduct this phrase and use it to back the case for a once-saved-always-saved doctrine. But this verse has nothing to do with Christians at all; the subject is Israel (they were hated for the gentiles’ sake and loved for the Patriarch’s sake). So the permanence of Israel’s calling as God’s chosen people is the context. However, as many of you are probably aware, a goodly portion of the Church has determined that in the New Testament, wherever we find the word “Israel” as regards redemption and election, we should just strike it out and replace it with the word “Church”. Yet Paul says that such a calling of Israel cannot be revoked, canceled, or as some Christians think, be re-assigned to somebody else. Israel is, and will always be, God’s elect. Their unfaithfulness and their sinning do not affect that position even though by human standards and reasoning we might think it should. But what does Paul mean by it is for the Patriarch’s sake that God continues to love Israel? What is the Patriarch’s sake? They were the receivers of God’s precious promises; and those promises are contained in a covenant: the Abrahamic Covenant. So, what is really being said is that Israel is loved by God, without any chance of revocation, for the sake of the Covenant He made with the Patriarchs. It is the covenant relationship with Israel that is not cancelable for any reason

Guzik: The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable: This is another reason why God hasn’t given up on national and ethnic Israel. This principle, stated by Paul, comforts us far beyond its direct relevance to Israel. It means that God will not give up on us and He leaves the path open to restoration. ¹¹⁰

ESV: Israel will be saved because God never revokes his saving promises. Gifts (Gk. charisma) means things freely given by God, and the word can be used to refer to different kinds of gifts. Sometimes the word refers to spiritual gifts for ministry (as in 1:11; 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4) and sometimes to the gift of salvation (Rom. 5:15–16; 6:23), but the context here favors yet a third kind of “gifts,” namely, the unique blessings given to Israel which Paul mentioned at the beginning of this long section (9:4–5). calling (Gk. klēsis, using the same root as Gk. eklogē, “election,” in 11:28; also in 9:11; 11:7) refers here to calling to salvation (cf. 8:30; 9:11, 24). ¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹¹⁰ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

¹¹¹ ESV Study Bible Notes

³⁰For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:

Missler: The Gentiles to whom Paul wrote were at one time disobedient to God, but in this Age of Grace Gentiles (you) have now received mercy. When Adam disobeyed (5:19) all were constituted sinners because all humanity sinned in Adam (5:12). (Cf. “disobedient” in Eph. 2:2; 5:6; and “disobedience” in Heb. 4:6, 11.)¹¹²

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

In verse 30 Paul makes a comparison between Israel and gentiles. The purpose is to make clear the equality in God’s eyes between Jews and gentiles, and to highlight once again that gentiles should understand that it is nothing that they did that has caused God to offer them salvation; rather it was because of His great mercy. But even more, gentiles were disobedient. Paul spent the first few chapters of Romans speaking of gentiles in terms of Natural Law; and that humans have written within our inner parts certain premises for behavior and morality...all humans possess this. Thus, the fact that gentiles didn’t have the Law of Moses to go by doesn’t change anything. Breaking the Natural Law is no different as pertains to sin than breaking the Law of Moses; it is still disobedience. The result of this disobedience is the same, then, for those who have the Natural Law (gentiles) as for those who have the Law of Moses (the Jews): the eternal death sentence. Therefore, gentiles are in equal need for God’s mercy as are the Jews.

And yet, Paul cautions, the mercy that gentiles have received was ONLY because of Israel’s disobedience and God’s reaction to it. Therefore, says Paul, it is the duty of gentiles to show the disobedient Jews mercy, because by showing Jews the same mercy that God showed to the gentiles then the Jews can also receive God’s mercy. And what is God’s mercy? Salvation through trust in Yeshua! I’ll bet you have never thought about your salvation in those terms, have you? Let’s break this down. The disobedient Jews were hardened by God. This enabled God to turn to gentiles and offer them the mercy, the salvation that Israel, as a whole, turned down. But now gentiles, understanding that our job is to make Israel jealous for the same salvation that we have through their Messiah, is to accomplish this by showing such Godly love to them that they can’t resist. And by Believing gentiles showing the Jewish people such tender love and mercy, it will make them open to accepting the saving mercy through Yeshua that saved us. This reaction of Jews to Believing gentiles is guaranteed. But shoving a Christian tract into a Jew’s hands on a street corner; or laying an English New Testament on the front porch of an Ultra-Orthodox Jew is not showing them God’s mercy; all that does is offend. So, what does show love and mercy to the Jewish people? What is the actual application of this duty of gentile Believers to show love and mercy to Jews?

By way of example I suppose this makes me want to boast a little bit about Seed of Abraham Ministries because while we teach this and other Godly principles, we also obey God’s command to show love and mercy to the Jewish people. We have a nonprofit retail store that imports goods made by industrious Jews in Israel, and we sell those goods in America, and online, to help Jewish families make a living. We have a humanitarian ministry in Jerusalem, run entirely by Messianic Jews, that helps Israelis in need, provides scholarships to college and vocational schools for Israeli youth, and helps the young soldiers of the IDF with clothing and other items that the army can’t provide them. We also operate a sizeable youth ministry there to mentor

¹¹² Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

the young Believing Jewish adults in their walk with Yeshua. We have another and different ministry in the Mediterranean port city of Ashdod. It is a teaching ministry that teaches the Holy Scriptures, including the New Testament, in the Hebrew language to the local Jews. Then we disciple those who have shown an interest in Yeshua. We, of course, aren't the only ones taking literally God's command to show mercy to Jews in response to the saving righteousness that we have received from God on account of them. But folks, the Father is not offering us a suggestion to show mercy to His people. I've often said that, sadly enough, the evangelical Church has made salvation itself the goal of being a Christian. Thus, once saved we can retire, secure that we'll go to Heaven when we die. Yet the Lord makes it clear that we are saved for a purpose larger than ourselves. And one of our great purposes is to help save all Israel. That isn't our only purpose, but it is the purpose that Yehoveh says is at the top of His list.

McGee 30-31: You see, Paul is writing to Gentiles -- the church in Rome was largely composed of Gentile believers. By this time, many Gentiles were being saved. He is drawing a contrast here between the nation of Israel and the Gentiles. In times past, the Gentiles did not believe, but now a remnant of the Gentiles have "obtained mercy." During this same time period Israel as a nation, which formerly believed, does not now believe. Paul puts down the principle by which God saves both Jew and Gentile: it is by mercy. Just as God showed mercy to the Gentiles, He will show mercy to the nation Israel.¹¹³

BKC: 11:30-32. The Gentiles to whom Paul wrote were at one time disobedient to God, but in this Age of Grace Gentiles (you) have now received mercy. When Adam disobeyed (5:19) all were constituted sinners because all humanity sinned in Adam (5:12). (Cf. "disobedient" in Eph. 2:2; 5:6; and "disobedience" in Heb. 4:6, 11.) Israel (they) is now corporately disobedient to God so that when God's mercy to the Gentiles (you) reaches its full number (Rom. 11:25), Israel will again receive mercy (cf. vv. 26-27). God's ultimate purpose is to have mercy on... all. To do so justly God has bound (synekleisen, "enclosed, shut in on all sides") all men over to disobedience. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (3:23). "Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin" (3:9), so that "there is no difference" (3:22). When the Gentiles rejected God and disobeyed Him (1:17-21), God chose Abraham and his descendants as His special people. Now the disobedience of the Jews enables God to show mercy to the Gentiles. Then, when that purpose is achieved, He will again show mercy to Israel corporately.¹¹⁴

Guzik: You were once disobedient to God: The Gentile Christians came from disobedience; yet God showed them mercy, in part through the disobedience of Israel.

Obtained mercy through their disobedience: If God used the disobedience of Israel for the good of Gentiles, He can also use the mercy shown to Gentiles for the mercy of Israel.¹¹⁵

ESV: 30–31 Salvation history is structured to feature God's great mercy. God saved the Gentiles when one would expect only the Jews to be saved, but in the future he will amaze all by his grace again by saving the Jews, so that it will be clear that everyone's salvation is by mercy alone. The

¹¹³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹¹⁴ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

¹¹⁵ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

final now in the text does not mean the promise to the Jews is now fulfilled but that the promise of Jewish salvation could be fulfilled at any time.¹¹⁶

³¹Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

Missler: Israel (they) is now corporately disobedient to God so that when God's mercy to the Gentiles (you) reaches its full number (Rom. 11:25), Israel will again receive mercy (cf. vv. 26-27).¹¹⁷

³²For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

Missler: "Concluded": *sugkleio*: to shut up together, enclose; (of a shoal of fishes in a net); to shut up on all sides, shut up completely.

God's ultimate purpose is to have mercy on . . . all. To do so justly God has "enclosed, shut in on all sides" all men over to disobedience. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (3:23). "Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin" (3:9), so that "there is no difference" (3:22).

When the Gentiles rejected God and disobeyed Him (1:17-21), God chose Abraham and his descendants as His special people. Now the disobedience of the Jews enables God to show mercy to the Gentiles. Then, when that purpose is achieved, He will again show mercy to Israel corporately.¹¹⁸

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Verse 32 essentially summarizes the focal point of Romans chapters 9 through 11. The twin themes of disobedience by all humans, and God's mercy to all humans, dominates all of Romans. Paul discussed this issue in regards to gentiles quite explicitly back in Romans 1:18 through Romans 2:16. He then discussed it in regards to Jewish people in 2:17 through 3:20, and then took it up again in chapters 5 and 7. What Paul wants all people to understand is that God does NOT cause people to disobey. People disobey because we want to. We don't usually do it out of ignorance, and we don't sin because we don't want to; we sin because we enjoy it. We sin usually because in our selfishness we find it pleasurable and beneficial to us. But when we do sin we find ourselves imprisoned by God, having our advantages and benefits divinely limited, and then we are subjected to consequences because God is just and disobedience towards Him cannot go unpunished. This is the condition all humanity faces; not just Jews or not just gentiles. Thus in God's infinite wisdom, because all humanity sins and falls short of the glory of God, all humanity is imprisoned (shut up) in our disobedience. But then God uses this common condition among all humans to make equally available to all humans His great mercy, through His Son Yeshua. Perhaps you can think of a better way that you might have approached the problem of sin and eternal death if you were God. Literally billions of humans think they can. It doesn't matter: this is God's way, and it is the only way that will ever be offered to us.

¹¹⁶ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹¹⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹¹⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

It is tragic that scoffers and mockers look at this way of the Lord and laugh. They see Yeshua's followers as little more than children following a fantasy. They read about God's plan of redemption and think how silly and impractical it is. But Paul virtually breaks into song as he thinks about the mystery, the hidden but now revealed truth that the Lord showed him; about how God saves people from eternal annihilation. 33 O the depth of the riches and the wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his judgments! How unsearchable are his ways!

But this not the usual response from humans. Back in Romans chapter 1, Paul said:

Romans 1:20-22 CJB 20 For ever since the creation of the universe his invisible qualities- both his eternal power and his divine nature- have been clearly seen, because they can be understood from what he has made. Therefore, they have no excuse; 21 because, although they know who God is, they do not glorify him as God or thank him. On the contrary, they have become futile in their thinking; and their undiscerning hearts have become darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they have become fools!

McGee: Both Jew and Gentile are in the stubborn state of rebellion and aggravated unbelief. Because of this, by grace we are saved, through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any of us should boast (see Eph. 2:8-9).¹¹⁹

Guzik: God has committed them all to disobedience: The idea is that God has shut up both Jew and Gentile into custody as lawbreakers. God offers mercy to these prisoners, based on the person and work of Jesus.¹²⁰

ESV: The word all here refers to Jews and Gentiles (all without distinction, not all without exception). The sin and disobedience of both Jews and Gentiles is highlighted, to emphasize God's mercy in saving some among both Jews and Gentiles.¹²¹

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

Missler: Having concluded his discourse on God's righteousness in His sovereign choices, he bursts out with praise.

"Unsearchable" = translates the one word *anexereunetos*, which means "incapable of being traced by footprints." In Ephesians 3:8, its only other use in the New Testament refers to the riches of Christ.¹²²

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

In verses 33 and 34, using passages from Isaiah 40 and from Job 41, Paul continues to extol the virtues and character of our God from His supreme sovereignty, to his unceasing faithfulness, to the fact that not one thing that He promises will ever go undone. Should we not be as overwhelmed as is the Apostle Paul?

¹¹⁹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹²⁰ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

¹²¹ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹²² Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

So rightfully so, Paul ends this section with a blessing that is also a prayer of thanksgiving for God's great love and mercy towards mankind:

McGee: Reason For Restoring The Nation Israel (11:33-36)

What is the reason that the nation Israel will be restored? Well, that is locked in the riches of the wisdom of God. My friend, let's rest on the fact that what God is doing is wise, it is right, and it is the best that can be done. You and I have an old nature that questions God when He makes a decision. I have heard many Christians say, "Why are the heathen lost when they haven't heard the gospel? God has no right to condemn them!" My friend, God has every right imaginable. He is God. And what He is doing is right. If you don't think it is right, your thinking is wrong. And if you don't think He is being smart, you are wrong. God is not stupid. You and I may be stupid, but God is not. Oh, how we need to recognize this!

Paul has come to the place of recognizing the wisdom and the glory of all that he has been discussing.

Godet's statement on this section is worth quoting: "Like a traveller who has reached the summit of an Alpine ascent, the apostle turns and contemplates. Depths are at his feet, but waves of light illumine them, and there spreads all around an immense horizon which his eye commands."

This section is pure praise and is no argument at all, yet it is the greatest argument of all. If we do not understand the why of God's dealings with Israel, with the Gentiles, and with ourselves, it is not because there is not a good and sufficient reason. The difficulty is with our inability to comprehend the wisdom and ways of God. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1Cor. 2:14).

Once, while driving back from Texas to California, my little girl developed a fever of 104 degrees. I took her to a hospital in Phoenix, Arizona. She did not understand why I had taken her to the hospital, especially when the doctor probed around and actually made her cry. She said, "Daddy, why did you bring me here?" She did not understand that, since she was sick, I was doing the wisest thing I could do under the circumstances and that I was doing it because I loved her. Oh, my friend, God is doing what is best for us. We may not understand the things that happen to us, but we must believe that it is for our good that God allows them. We are like little children, and we cannot understand God's ways. Our circumstances may not always seem to be good, but they come from the "depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." God says to us, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9). Oh, how we need to recognize this fact.¹²³

BKC: 11:33-36. As Paul ended his discussion on the revelation of God's righteousness in His sovereign choice, he burst forth in a doxology of praise to God. He exclaimed, Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! The plan of God for the salvation of all people demonstrates God's infinite knowledge and His ability to use it wisely. God has revealed some of His judgments and His paths ("ways") so that people may know them, but it is humanly impossible to exhaust them. Beyond tracing out translates the one word *anexichniastoi*, which means "incapable of being traced by footprints." In Ephesians 3:8, its only other use in the New Testament, it is rendered "unsearchable" and refers to the riches of Christ.

¹²³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

The apostle then quoted Isaiah 40:13, which shows that God is the sole Designer of His wise plan. No one knows His mind or gives Him advice. This is followed by a free quotation from Job 41:11, which testifies to God's sole responsibility for His acts. God is indeed the Sovereign of all things, the One to whom all creatures are accountable and whom all should glorify. He is under no obligation to repay anyone, for no one has ever given Him anything. Paul concluded, For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. God is the first Cause, the effective Cause, and the final Cause of everything. His deep ways are beyond man's discovering (Rom. 11:33); beyond man's knowing (v. 34a), beyond man's counseling (v. 34b), and beyond man's giving (v. 35). "All things" come from Him and by means of Him (John 1:3; Col. 1:16a; Rev. 4:11) and are for Him and His glory (Col. 1:16b). Therefore, To Him be the glory forever! Amen (cf. Rom. 15:6; 16:27; 1 Peter 4:11; Rev. 5:12-13). God is the only proper One to magnify (1 Cor. 1:31). The all-sovereign God deserves the praise of all His creatures.¹²⁴

Guzik: Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! As Paul considers God's great plan of the ages, he breaks into spontaneous praise. Paul realizes that God's ways are past finding out, and God's wisdom and knowledge is beyond him.

Who would have planned the whole scenario with Israel, the Gentiles, and the Church as God has planned it? Yet, we can see the great wisdom and compassion in His plan.

"It is strange that, with such a scripture as this before their eyes, men should sit down coolly and positively write about counsels and decrees of God formed from all eternity, of which they speak with as much confidence and decision as if they had formed a part of the council of the Most High, and had been with him in the beginning of his ways!" (Clarke)¹²⁵

FCSBN: 33–36 Doxology. This doxology summarizes in poetic form God's mysterious way of drawing all people to himself, even as it appears that many have rejected his plan. Two passages of Scripture create a backdrop for this doxology (see Job 41:11; Isa 40:13).¹²⁶

³⁴For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

Missler: The apostle then quoted Isaiah 40:13, which shows that God is the sole Designer of His wise plan.¹²⁷

McGee 34-35: These questions that we have here are simple enough, but the answer is not so easy.

"Who hath known the mind of the Lord?" Well, no one knows the mind of the Lord -- that's the answer. It was Paul's ambition to know Him. He says, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" (Phil. 3:10).

"Who hath been his counsellor?" No one can advise God. I have seen a lot of church boards that felt they were really giving God good advice, but He doesn't need it. Have you noticed that the Lord Jesus never asked for advice when He was here on earth? One time -- before feeding the

¹²⁴ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

¹²⁵ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

¹²⁶ First-Century Study Bible Notes

¹²⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

five thousand -- He asked Philip, "...Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" Why did He ask that question? "And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do" (John 6:5-6). He didn't need Philip's advice. The fact of the matter is, he didn't use His disciples' advice. They said, "Send them away." He said, "You give them something to eat." My friend, God does not ask for advice, although a lot of folk want to give Him advice today.

"Who hath first given to him?" Have you ever really given anything to God which put Him in the awkward position of owing you something? If you were able to give God something, He would owe you something. What do you have that He hasn't already given you? I think one reason many of us are so poor is simply because we return to Him so little of what He has given us. To tell the truth, God says He won't be in debt to anybody. When somebody gives Him something, He turns around and gives him more. Years ago someone asked a financier in Philadelphia, a wonderful Christian man, "How is it that you have such wealth, and yet you give away so much?" The financier replied, "Well, I shovel it out, and God shovels it in; and God's shovel is bigger than my shovel!" Oh, my friend, most of us are not giving God a chance to use His shovel! We cannot do anything for Him -- He will give us back more than we give to Him.¹²⁸

Guzik: For who has known the mind of the Lord? The quotations from Isaiah 40:13 and Job 41:11 emphasize both God's wisdom and sovereign conduct; no one can make God their debtor.

Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him? You can try all you want – but you will never make God a debtor to you. You can't out-give God. He will never need to repay a debt to anyone.¹²⁹

ESV: Concluding Doxology. As he concludes his setting forth of God's great plan in the history of salvation (chs. 1-11), Paul breaks forth into praise. God's wisdom and ways are far beyond the understanding of human beings, and hence he deserves all the glory.

11:34–35 The words of Isa. 40:13 teach that no human being knows the mind of the Lord apart from revelation, and no one can serve as God's adviser. Likewise the majestic words of Job 41:11 are a reminder that no one ultimately gives anything to God. Instead, everything humans have is a gift from God (1 Cor. 4:7).¹³⁰

³⁵Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

Missler: A free quotation from Job 41:11, which testifies to God's sole responsibility for His acts. God is indeed the Sovereign of all things, the One to whom all creatures are accountable and whom all should glorify. He is under no obligation to repay anyone, for no one has ever given Him anything.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹²⁹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

¹³⁰ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹³¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

³⁶**For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.**

Missler: God is the first Cause,
the effective Cause, and
the final Cause of everything.

His deep ways are beyond man's discovering (Rom. 11:33);
beyond man's knowing (v. 34a),
beyond man's counseling (v. 34b), and
beyond man's giving (v. 35).

"All things" come from Him and by means of Him (John 1:3; Col. 1:16a; Rev. 4:11) and are for Him and His glory (Col. 1:16b).

God is the only proper One to magnify (1 Cor. 1:31). (cf. Rom. 15:6; 16:27; 1 Peter 4:11; Rev. 5:12-13).

The danger among believers today:

a pride of race;
a pride of face;
a pride of grace.

Paul said he had nothing to glory in. If he had none, then certainly we have none!

Seek: righteousness. Meekness. [Do you?]¹³²

McGee: This just lifts me to the heights. Let me give you my translation: Because out of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things. To Him be the glory unto the ages. Amen. Alford labeled this verse "the sublimest apostrophe existing even in the pages of inspiration itself."

"Out of Him" means God is the all-sufficient cause and source of everything.

"Through Him" means God is the mighty sustainer and worker. "...My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," Jesus said (John 5:17).

"Unto Him" means God must call every creature to account to Him. All things flow toward God.

"To whom be glory" -- the glory belongs to Him in all ages. Are we robbing God of His glory by taking credit for things we have no business to claim? The glory belongs to Him.

Oh, my friend, what a section of Scripture we have been in, and we leave it reluctantly.¹³³

Guzik: Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things: "All these words are monosyllables. A child just learning to read could easily spell them out. But who shall exhaust their meaning?" (Meyer)

It is all of Him: This plan came from God. It wasn't man's idea. We didn't say, "I've offended God and have to find a way back to Him. Let's work on a plan to come back to God." In our spiritual indifference and death we didn't care about a plan, and even if we did care we aren't smart enough or wise enough to make one. It is all of Him.

It is all through Him: Even if we had the plan, we couldn't make it happen. We couldn't free ourselves from this prison of sin and self. It could only happen through Him, and the great work of Jesus on our behalf is the through Him that brings salvation.

¹³² Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹³³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

It is all to Him: It's not for me, it's not for you, it's all to Him. It is to the praise of the glory of His grace (Ephesians 1:6). It's for His pleasure that we are created, and we find our fulfillment in bringing Him glory and honor.

To whom be glory forever: The fact that Paul can't figure out God makes him glorify God all the more. When we understand some of the greatness of God, we worship Him all the more passionately.¹³⁴

ESV: Since all things are from God, and through God, and for God, it follows that he deserves all the glory forever. God's saving plan brings him great honor, praise, and glory forever and ever.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-11.cfm?a=1057001

¹³⁵ ESV Study Bible Notes