

THE SECRET OF HIS PURPOSE THE PLAN FOR THE FULLNESS OF THE TIMES
TO HEAD UP ALL THINGS IN THE KING,
EVERYTHING IN THE HEAVENS AND ON THE EARTH,
IN JESUS....

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#64

Fullness of the Nations—All Israel Saved

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For I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be wise within yourselves, that hardness in part has happened to Israel until *the fullness [multitude] of the nations comes* in.... (Romans 11:25 LITV [italic added])

And so, *all Israel will be saved*, even as it has been written, "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob." (Romans 11:26 LITV [italic added])

As for me, God forbid that I should boast—except in the cross of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. Circumcision, you see, is nothing; neither is circumcision! What matters is new creation. Peace and mercy on everyone who lines up by that standard—yes, on *God's Israel*. (Galatians 6:14-16 Kingdom NT [italic added])

In Romans 9-11, Paul wrote of a mystery pertaining to the fullness of the nations and all Israel being saved. Without doubt, this mystery is a source of much debate and controversy among the theologians and expositors. As I try to do in most of my writings, I don't intend to try to sort through the controversy; I'm not sure I could do it even if I wanted. I'll leave that to the debaters.

The conclusion that I drive toward in this article is this—*all Israel* that will be saved is the multitude or fullness of the nations. Stated another way—the fullness of the nations is Israel. The two are one and the same. To the Galatians, Paul called God's Israel *new creation*. This new creation is the glorious fulfillment of the promises to Abraham, the father of nations. As is shown in what follows, the phrase *the fullness of the nations* harkens back to the prophetic blessing given by Jacob-Israel to Joseph's two sons as he adopted Ephraim and Manasseh. He blessed them with his God-given name *Israel* and gave a firstborn blessing to Ephraim-Israel that from his seed would come *the fullness of the nations*. This blessing was not lost on Paul, for he raised up the theme of sonship and adoption in Romans 8:15, 23; 9:4; Galatians 4:5; and Ephesians 1:5, as well as the fullness (or, multitude) of the nations (Romans 11:25).

Adding to this, Paul introduces the olive tree and its rich root as a metaphor of those who believe in Messiah Jesus. He also stresses the process of ingrafting or, as I call it, *graftage*. Those who believe in Jesus are grafted into the olive tree, whether as branches of the cultivated olive tree or as branches from the wild olive tree. Naturally, those in Jesus' day, who believed much like Paul, did not require grafting, for they were already a natural part of the olive tree. The ones who required grafting were the believers in Messiah Jesus from among the nations (commonly called *gentiles*) who were previously separated from the commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:8-22). Consequently, all those grafted into the olive tree become God's Israel. It represents God's chosen people from among all the nations, including physical Israelites. This constituted then and

constitutes today the Israel God has always intended to have that is entirely based on His Son and a new covenant based on a new heart, a new spirit, and God's law written on hearts.

Further—as I have shown in other articles noted below—down through the many centuries since Calvary, the spirit of God has been grafting physical descendants of Israel into the olive tree, only they do not know they are from one of the twelve tribes. Generally speaking, many today claim descendancy as Jews from Judah and Levi mostly (possibly Benjamin as well), but practically no one claims to be a descendant of the other ten tribes that went into dispersion from 745-721 BC (and at other times). These tribes have been described as the lost tribes of the house of Israel. There is a good deal of material along this line that I have referenced in other articles that won't be repeated here. You are encouraged to read the following, along with this article.

Abraham's Multitude of Nations — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art63.pdf>

Until Shiloh Comes — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art66.pdf>

Dualism, Reversionism, Graftage — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art39.pdf>

America—Wake Up! — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art67.pdf>

Olive Tree in Scripture — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art34.pdf>

To be clear, Paul does not make any direct assertion about the lost tribes; this I have read into this portion of Romans—based on historical, etymological, anthropological, and archeological evidences gleaned through others.

Now, it is not my intent to offer an analysis of every line of Romans 9-11. My intent is to provide an overview (numerically listed) of these chapters (mostly in order, but not always), leading up to the olive tree and how Paul concludes Romans 11. So, let's begin.

1. Gentiles are Goyim/Ethne—Nations

In Hebrew scripture, the word *nation(s)* is a translation of the word *goy* [plural, *goyim*], and, in Greek scripture, the word *ethnos* [plural, *ethne*]. These are generic words that can apply to any nation, whether speaking of ancient Israel or Judah, or any other nation in the world. However, translators inject their interpretative bias by using the words *gentile* or *heathen* in order to make a distinction between the nation of Judah (Jewish) or Israel and the rest of the nations that are non-Jewish or non-Israelite. In Romans 9-11, it is common to see the word *gentiles* used up to seven times; some translations mix it up a bit by translating the Greek *ethne* into either gentiles or nations. I would appreciate them not making this distinction for me; I'll decide. I prefer the more literal translations that are more concordantly accurate, which means they use the word *nations* and not *gentiles*.

This bias is seen in the way these words are defined by *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*.

Goy is "a foreign *nation*; hence a *Gentile*; also (figuratively) a *troop* of animals, or a *flight* of locusts: - Gentile, heathen, nation, people."

Ethnos is "a *race* (as of the same *habit*), that is, a *tribe*; specifically, a *foreign* (non-Jewish) one (usually by implication *pagan*): - Gentile, heathen, nation, people."

Notice how *Strong* defines these words in relation to something foreign to the Jew and makes others outside of the Jews as heathen or pagan in their belief system. This arbitrary distinction falls apart in Romans 11:25. The fullness of nations are not heathens, but believers.

Not to confuse you, but going forward, there are times when it is more convenient to use the word *gentiles*. Hopefully, you will understand why.

2. Physical Israel

We must be clear that when Paul first mentions Israel or the Israelites, he is referring to *physical* Israel, which could also be called *ethnic* or *genealogical* Israel. I will use these three terms interchangeably. We cannot run from Paul's subject matter by spiritualizing it into something other than physical Israel, or by making it all about only the physical Jews, as so many do. One important evidence that Israel was on Paul's heart is the fact that, in these three chapters, Paul references Israel (Israelites) thirteen times and Jews only twice. Paul focuses on something much larger than the smaller tribe(s) of Jews (Judahites).

As an aside, in reading some commentary on these chapters, the commentators start by mentioning Israel but then making their entire commentary about the Jews. This adds a layer of confusion that is quite unnecessary. In Galatians 6:15-16, Paul joins the *new creation* with the *Israel of God*. Nowhere in his letters does he call God's Israel, *the Judahs of God*. Romans is no exception—he is entirely focused on God's Israel throughout Romans 9-11. Further, when Paul reminds us that there is no longer a distinction between Jew and gentile, along with many other groups, have you noticed that he never includes Israel in his lists of "no more distinctions"? Why? Because Israel stands out as something apart from these distinctions. As shown later, the explanation of why is found in the phrase *all Israel will be saved*.

Apparently, there is reason why the Jews held onto the name *Israel*. Why not? After all, as descendants of Jacob-Israel, Jews are rightfully sons of Israel (see Ezra, Nehemiah). When the ten tribes were lost to history and the Jews (primarily, Judah, Benjamin, Levi) returned to Judea, they assumed the role and title of *Israel*. In addition, sometime after the first century, the Jews were and still are the only ones making such a claim. No one nation or ethnic group in the world claims to be descendants of one of the other ten tribes lost to history. Thus, the two names became synonymous, even to the present day, something the church has adopted as well. Adding to this, the modern-day Jewish nation called *Israel* took the name, thus reinforcing the perception. In studying this section of Romans, we need to keep these distinctions in mind.

3. Jews and Greeks

Of the two references to Jews (Romans 9:24; 10:12), the most interesting one emphasizes there is no longer a distinction between Jew or Greek. Notice that it is not gentiles, but Greeks. *For there is no distinction between Jews and Greeks*. Why Greeks and not gentiles? Prior to the Romans, the Greeks had conquered much territory; consequently, they left their mark in language and culture throughout the known world. To make the Greeks synonymous with the gentiles is no stretch. However, there may be another reason why Paul uses the word *Greeks*.

In Paul's day, there were two types of Jews—Hebrew Jews and Hellenistic Jews. *Hellenes* or *Hellenistic* Jews had adopted the Greek language and much of the Greek culture through acculturation (see Acts 6). When the Jews were taken captive by the Babylonians, like the Israelites, a remnant returned to Judea but most remained behind and over time some migrated to other areas and nations. Some ended in Greek speaking areas/nations where they were integrated into their host society, while others migrated back to Judea and others made pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the feasts. However, the Hellenistic Jews were so distinct from nonintegrated Hebrew Jews that the Hellenes had their own synagogues in Jerusalem. These distinctions can be seen in Acts 14:1; 18:4, and 19:10—Paul tried to persuade both the Jews and the Greeks in the synagogues. What were Greeks doing in synagogues if they weren't Jews? So, when Paul said the gospel went to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Romans 1:16), he could have been referring to the two types of Jews receiving the good news first. We need not exclude *non-Jews* from this group, but it is clear that the emphasis in the early ministry of the disciples, including that of Paul, was on reaching the Jews.

To the dispensational dualists, why would Paul try to persuade them if they were God's chosen simply based on the physical and they had some unique destiny? Why not let them go if they were supposedly on a different path from the rest of the church?

What does this mean in our context? Paul, throughout his epistles, makes the point that there is no division in the Messiah (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11). The two types of Jews were divided, so he stressed that in Christ even this division has been removed. Carrying it to its fullest measure, there is no division or distinction for anyone of any kind in Christ. Paul was the apostle of this message.

4. A Pained Heart

Stepping away from doctrine or theology and pressing into Paul's heart, we realize that this brother in Christ was nearly heartbroken that many of his fellow kinsmen from all the tribes were pruned out of the olive tree. Step into Paul's passionate heart.

I'm speaking the truth in the Messiah; I'm not lying. I call my conscience as witness, in the holy spirit, that I have great sorrow and endless pain in my heart. Left to my own self, I am half-inclined to pray that I would be accursed, cut off from the Messiah, on behalf of my own family, my own flesh-and-blood relatives. They are Israelites; the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship and promises all belong to them. The patriarchs are their ancestors; and it is from them, according to the flesh, that the Messiah has come—who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen! But it can't be the case that God's word has failed! Not all who are from Israel, you see, are in fact Israel. (Romans 9:1-6 Kingdom NT)

Outwardly, it might have looked like God failed to reach His intended purpose for Israel. This might have been what drove Paul to pen Romans 9-11. I see these three chapters as I do 1 Corinthians 15. To the Corinthians, Paul defends the resurrection. To the Romans, Paul defends and explains Israel, but perhaps, not in the way most think, at least as I interpret it.

5. Not All Israel are Israel

Paul could not accept that God's word failed for Israel. It wasn't possible. Paul's answer to this troubling contradiction is that not all Israel is in fact Israel. What did he mean by this? As expected, there are many theories about this. One of the accepted thoughts is that Paul is referring to Abraham's family tree that has many branches and the only one that matters is the Isaac branch. This is true—Paul makes his case for this in the next few verses. But here, I believe Paul is considering Jacob.

The phrase *all who are not from Israel* is explained more clearly by other translations, such as this one: For not all those who are *descended* from Israel are *truly* Israel (Romans 9:6 LEB). The words *descended* and *truly* do not appear in the Greek, but they do help to add some acceptable clarity.

At this point, Paul embarks down a road that explains his concept (and God's) of the Israel of God. In this way, it could be called the *true* Israel, as some commentators do. So, although Paul groans for his blood relatives from the tribes of Israel, right up front, he acknowledges that this is not the true Israel that he is writing about. He was groaning desiring that the blood descendants of Israel would come into the true Israel as God has always planned, not the one that failed so miserably.

Keep in mind that Israel is Jacob who was given the name *Israel* by God; it was not his natural name given at birth. Here is an excerpt from my article *Until Shiloh Comes* that explains Jacob's wrestling match with the angel.

What Jacob received was far greater than any fleshly victory of man; he received a new name and a new nature. Jacob's wrestler was no mere man but God (angel) wrestling with him. He proclaimed that he saw God face to face as he wrestled with the angel called *Peniel*, yet his life had been preserved. *Peniel* means "the presence of God"—this angel stood in the presence of God. Thus, he was given a new name from God that spoke of his new nature and prophetically would be attached not only to his descendants but to the multitude of nations promised through his grandfather Abraham. A new day had dawned on Jacob. "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but *Israel!*"

Footnotes in some bibles say *Israel* means "he who strives with God; or God strives". However, E.W. Bullinger in his *Companion Bible* gives what I believe to be a more appropriate definition of Israel. *God rules*.

Israel—*"God commands, orders or rules."* Man attempts it but always, in the end, fails. Out of some forty Hebrew names compounded with "El" or "Jah," God is always the doer of what the verb means (cp. Daniel, God judges).

It is this name, meaning *God commands, orders or rules*, that was given to Jacob.

Don't miss the significance of this name. To hold the name of *Israel* is not based on genes but on heart—a heart that has faith to believe in Jesus. An Israelite is one who lives under the rule of

God; get out from under this rule and you are no longer an Israelite. I believe this must be read into Paul's defense of Israel; otherwise, Israel simply remains a nationalistic or ethnic term.

Paul knew the history of the Israelites and all the Hebrew scripture that went along with it. Just because one was born of the bloodline of Jacob didn't guarantee that one would be an Israelite in the eyes of God. No one got a free pass just because they were from the right gene pool. Faith and God's rule (commands) were always at the heart of the name.

Consider the history of the ten tribes that went off to Samaria after Solomon's kingdom was split in two. From 745-721 BC, the tribes were cast out of their land and dispersed among the nations, losing their national name *Israel*. In relation to the ten tribes, this name was lost to history. Even some (ultra) orthodox Jews of our day acknowledge this; and, by the way, also acknowledge that Israel in the Middle East today has no right to be there with the name either.

Or, consider the twelve tribes coming out of Egypt as the sons of Israel. They could have gone straight away into their inheritance in the land, but what happened? Of the twelve spies that went into the land, only two, Joshua and Caleb, had the faith to trust God and enter into their inheritance. They alone saw that the land was good and that Israel needed to obey the Lord. Of Caleb, the Lord said: "*But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it*" (Numbers 14:24). Caleb's spirit had faith in the Lord. Of Joshua and Caleb, it is said that they were faithful to the Lord. These two men were true Israelites. Well, you know the end of the story. The entire first generation, except Joshua and Caleb, were banished to die in the wilderness over the next 38 or so years. The first-generation Israel died without receiving the inheritance.

Numerous examples are found in Hebrew scripture, nationally and individually, but the point is that no one, not even the entire nation of Israel or Judah, for that matter, ever got a free pass with the Lord just because they were of a certain bloodline. To make the claim that modern-day Jews (or, wrongly called *Israelites*) are chosen because they lay a claim to Jacob while they reject Jesus as Israel's Messiah is untenable and contrary to history and scripture. Jesus called ones who claim to be Jews, on this basis, liars. *They say they are Jews but they are not* (Revelation 2:9; also 3:9). Paul defines a true Jew for us: *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh* (Romans 2:28).

I am slightly off course by injecting the Jews into the storyline since Paul clearly is stressing Israel, but the same arguments apply to both. However, I believe the term *Jew* will fade away in history, as the term *Israel* continues on to the consummation of the ages. Again, Israel is prominent in Paul's defense that leads up to *all Israel will be saved*. This Israel is one of faith, not of genetics or of works of the law, but it does not exclude ethnic Israelites, who have no generational knowledge of their roots—rather it embraces them, along with all who come out of the nations.

6. The Promise

It seems as if Paul goes backward in his defense by bringing Abraham and Sarah into the picture. (I am selectively using different translations that make the point, even if they are more paraphrased than translated, although, the *Kingdom NT* is actually a translation.)

In fact, when God made the promise to Abraham, he meant only Abraham's descendants by his son Isaac. (Romans 9:7 CEV)

Nor is it the case that all the children count as "seed of Abraham." No: "in Isaac shall your seed be named." That means that it isn't the flesh-and-blood children who are God's children; rather, it is the children of promise who will be calculated as "seed." This was what the promise said, you see: "Around this time I shall return, and Sarah shall have a son." (Romans 9:7-9 Kingdom NT)

Paul had already elaborated on the faith of Abraham in Romans 4 and also in his letter to Galatia. Sarah and Mary had one thing in common—both required a direct act of God to conceive a child of promise. Isaac was a child of promise—a promise that he would come forth from Abraham and Sarah, not from Hagar or any other bondwoman or concubine. The ultimate seed is Christ, the Messiah of Israel.

See *Cast Out the Bondwoman* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art25.pdf>

Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. (Galatians 3:16 NASB)

Of course, there is a lot that could be said about the "seed." The point is that faith is paramount. The following translation makes the point: *Everything depends on having faith in God* and that faith is in the "seed," that is, in Messiah—whether one is a descendant of Abraham or not.

Abraham let himself be circumcised to show that he had been accepted because of his faith even before he was circumcised. This makes Abraham the father of all who are acceptable to God because of their faith, even though they are not circumcised. This also makes Abraham the father of everyone who is circumcised and has faith in God, as Abraham did before he was circumcised. God promised Abraham and his descendants that he would give them the world. This promise wasn't made because Abraham had obeyed a law, but because his faith in God made him acceptable. If Abraham and his descendants were given this promise because they had obeyed a law, then faith would mean nothing, and the promise would be worthless. God becomes angry when his Law is broken. But where there isn't a law, it cannot be broken. *Everything depends on having faith in God*, so that God's promise is assured by his great kindness. This promise isn't only for Abraham's descendants who have the Law. It is for all who are Abraham's descendants because they have faith, just as he did. Abraham is the ancestor of us all. (Romans 4:11-16 CEV [italic added])

Paul elaborates on Romans 4:16 in his Galatians epistle, where he defines a descendant of Abraham: *And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise* (Galatians 3:29). In other words, a descendant is no longer a physical one, but one who is of the faith of Abraham and that faith believes in Jesus. This is the basis of the expression *not all Israel are Israel*, as well as the basis for the meaning of Israel.

7. God's Choice and His Mercy

Paul moves on to the twins of Rebekah—Jacob and Esau—and how God chose one over the other. For more on Jacob-Israel and the birthright, again see the previously noted link for *Until Shiloh Comes*.

For, not as yet being born, nor putting into practice anything good or bad, that the purpose of God may be remaining as a choice, not out of acts, but of Him Who is calling, it was declared to her that "The greater shall be slaving [serving] for the inferior, according as it is written, "Jacob I love, yet Esau I hate." (Romans 9:11-13 CLV [NASB])

As the Creator, God gets to call the shots, so to speak. God calls and He chooses, and this is done all in accordance with His plan and purpose. We see this with Jesus as well: *You did not choose Me, I chose you* (John 15:16).

For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." (Romans 9:17 ESV)

Isn't God being unfair to Pharaoh? Some will say that God knew his heart and only did to him what was in his heart. Of course, God knows hearts, but this is not what Paul's quote from scripture is about. All that transpired between Moses and Pharaoh, including hardening the king's heart, was to fulfill God's purpose. The same is said about Esau. God didn't hate Esau in the sense that we hate one another. After all, the Lord blessed Esau; just not to the great degree he blessed Jacob. He loved Jacob more than Esau.

This is Paul's point: *So, then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires* (Romans 9:18). Who will find fault with God? Who resists His will? Is God unjust? No! Whatever He does, it is all part of His plan. All will work out to His glory in the end and perfect justice will be rendered to all. God will never rightly be accused of being unjust!

8. Potter and the Clay

Paul illustrates his point of mercy through the potter and the thing molded.

On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? (Romans 9:20-21 NASB)

Paul, who was well-versed in Hebrew scripture, most likely drew his imagery from Jeremiah.

The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD saying, "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will announce My words to you." Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something on the wheel. But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel,

as it pleased the potter to make. Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, "Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel. (Jeremiah 18:1-6 NASB)

Although Jeremiah was in the midst of Judah, special note must be made of who he is referencing—it is the house of Israel, not Judah. He has another word for Judah. This was a prophetic word pointing to the fact that the Lord took the vessel Israel and cast it out and dispersed it among the nations. When He did this, as the potter, He crumbled up the clay, so to speak, so that He could remold it into something new, that is, remake it into another vessel. As we will see, this vessel is a remolded Israel, based on faith that incorporates both physical Israelites and others outside of Israel—this is Abraham's multitude of nations. To those who argue against using the term *new* Israel, I would remind them that there is a new Jerusalem, along with a new heaven and a new earth. I think those who oppose new Israel need to reconsider their argument based on this one set of verses out of Jeremiah. Bookmark this; I am coming back to this thought when we arrive at Romans 11.

Rounding this out—Jeremiah had a special and specific word for Judah and Jerusalem.

'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Just so will I break this people and this city, even as one breaks a potter's vessel, which cannot again be repaired; and they will bury in Topheth because there is no other place for burial. (Jeremiah 19:11 NASB)

Jeremiah was told to buy a potter's earthenware jar and break it in the midst of the elders in the valley of Ben-hinnom. The message was clear. The Lord was going to break Judah and destroy its city so that it cannot again be repaired. The word *again* can be interpreted as *continually* or *repeatedly*. Some translations state that it cannot be made *whole again*. The point is that the Lord was going to destroy the city that held his name and in which He made known His presence in the temple. The city and the temple were destined for Topheth in the valley of Ben-hinnom or, in Greek scripture, the *gehenna of fire*.

From 604-597 BC, at God's behest, the Babylonians did just that; they destroyed it all. As we know, however, the city and the temple were rebuilt. When Jesus arrived on the scene the temple had become a robbers' den (Mathew 21:13). The city itself was defiled, and it thrust Jesus outside of it to be crucified (outside the camp). Because of this heinous rejection of Israel's Messiah and God, in parable, Jesus proclaimed: "*But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire*" (Matthew 22:7). This was fulfilled in 70 AD by the Roman army that God hired, much like He did with the Babylonians.

By the way, the fire Jesus spoke of was the *gehenna of fire* that He spoke of eleven times to the Jews, referring to the garbage dump outside of Jerusalem. This was the Topheth to which the city and the temple were destined. Unfortunately, translators and most all theologians have masked the real meaning of gehenna by erroneously translating it as *hell*. I have written on this.

See *Hell—Reality or Pagan Imagery* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art59.pdf>

The question is: Is Jeremiah's potter-earthenware jar prophecy still in play? Today, there is a fully rebuilt modern-day city of Jerusalem in the midst of a Jewish nation called *Israel*. Some make the point that Jerusalem has been rebuilt up to nine times. But since its days of glory under Solomon, it has never truly been made *whole again*. Even today, it is no such thing, for it lacks a temple. Of course, scripturally, it does not need one, for there is a new temple—the body of Christ. But this poses a question, based on Jeremiah's prophecy: Is there a day on the horizon when the Lord will once again send an army to deal with Jerusalem and, possibly, a rebuilt temple that tramples underfoot the Son of God? I don't know! But, if Jeremiah's prophecy still holds, the earthly Jerusalem will never be made whole again, no longer rebuilt *continually or repeatedly*.

But there is one more point to be highlighted. Regardless of the possibilities, I believe that Judah itself will be absorbed back into Israel, never to be seen as a single entity (explained in *Until Shiloh Comes*). Nevertheless, according to Paul's defense of Israel, it appears that Israel takes center stage, never to be lost again. It has been remolded into what we call *Christian*. This is not replacement theology; it is graftage!

9. "My People" and the Remnant

In reference to the Jews and the gentiles (ethnos; nations), Paul invokes Hosea and Isaiah.

Whom He also called, not only us, of *Jews*, but also out of *nations*. As also He says in Hosea, I will call those Not My people, My people! And those not beloved, Beloved! Hosea 2:23 "And it shall be, in the place where it was said to them, You are not My people, there they will be called, "Sons of the Living God." LXX-Hos. 2:1; MT-Hos. 2:23 But Isaiah cries on behalf of Israel, "If the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, ***the remnant*** will be saved." For He is bringing the matter to an end, and having been cut short "in righteousness," "because the Lord" "will do a thing cut short" "on the earth." Isa. 10:22, 23 And as Isaiah has said before, "Except the Lord of hosts left a seed to us, we would have become as Sodom, and we would have become as Gomorrah." Isa. 1:9 (Romans 9:24-29 LITV [bold italic added])

I believe he uses the term *Jews* because the good news went to the Jews first, for they were the ones that lived in Judea in that day, of which Paul was one of them—a saved remnant!

However, Hosea was a prophet to Israel not to Judah. There is a lot to the above prophecy, but here it is in a nutshell. The Lord dispersed or scattered Israel (ten tribes) among the nations. There they lost their national identity as Israel and became part of the nations or gentiles. As one commentator has noted; they became *gentilized*. Due to their idolatry, they became "not My people." When the good news went forth, it found a remnant of the sons of Israel (most likely, some from all twelve tribes) that were given the faith to believe on Jesus, the Messiah of Israel. In that place where they had settled outside the land of their forefathers, they were found and became "My people," "the sons of the living God." This all has to do with the migration of the sons of Israel, as I have written about in *Abraham's Multitude of Nations*.

Some commentators who agree along this line do not see physical Israel included in "My people." This is based on their failure to recognize that Israel, among the nations, had become gentiles

themselves (not My people), that is, like all the other nations of the world outside of physical Israel (also, not My people). It is vital for us not to be narrow-minded in our thinking, as if much of scripture must be interpreted as mutually exclusive. I see many things as mutually inclusive, for that is what the good news is all about. In this case, both physical Israelites that were *gentilized* and true gentiles (ethnos; nations) are included. And this is especially true in the light of where we are going with Paul's metaphor of the olive tree and *all Israel will be saved*.

What about Isaiah's remnant? We might be led to think this is a rather small number. In Paul's day, and all the years of Israel prior, surely a remnant could have been small. Depending on whose estimate one uses, the world population was no larger than 300 million in Jesus' day to 20 or so million 2,000 years earlier. Naturally, these are only estimates, so we can only take them so far. Going forward from Jesus' day, growth of the world population began to increase until it began to grow exponentially. Today, the projection is that there are about 7.5 billion of us occupying planet earth. How large does a remnant called out of the domain of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the Son of God's love have to be given these numbers? How large is the remnant that has come out of darkness into the light by grace through faith since Calvary? Estimates put Christianity at over 2 billion of us today?

Surely, every generation has had a remnant of the physical descendants of Israel come to faith; only most of them never knew they were descendants, even to this day. This remnant, along with those who are not descendants, are the Christians who make up the multitude of nations promised to Abraham on the basis of faith. To be clear, on a much larger scale, the remnant is the entire ecclesia, the body of Christ, called out from among the entire population of the world—those of the faith of Abraham.

10. Faith

Paul starts chapter 10 with his heart's desire and prayer to God for his native brethren to come into salvation—*who were zealous for God, but not in accordance with knowledge*. Paul continues to build his defense that salvation is all based on faith. *Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed* (Romans 10:11). *Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved* (Romans 10:13). *How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!* (Romans 10:15). *So, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ* (Romans 10:17). In all this, we need to note that Paul is quoting Hebrew scripture, proving that faith was the path all along. Even the law was supposed to be applied by faith, not by the letter or by works.

We don't have to dwell here, for faith is the hallmark of being Christian or a Christ-*abider*! Paul is quite diligent to make sure we all get the point.

11. New Heart, New Spirit

Paul appeals to Hebrew scripture once again. Notice how he proves his points by invoking the prophets.

But not all obeyed the gospel, for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" Isa. 53:1
Then faith is of hearing, and hearing through the Word of God. But I say, Did they not hear?

Yes, rather, "into all the earth their voice went out, and to the ends of the world their words." LXX-Psa. 18:5; MT-Psa. 19:4 But I say, Did not Israel know? First, Moses says, "I will provoke you to jealousy by a non-nation, by an unwise nation I will anger you." Deut. 32:21 But Isaiah is very bold and says, "I was found by those not seeking Me; I became known to those not inquiring after Me." Isa. 65:1 But to Israel He says, "All the day I stretched out My hands to a disobeying and contradicting people." Isa. 65:2 (Romans 10:16-21 LITV)

You see, the gospel went forth to the ancient sons of Israel, but they did not obey it. God stretched out His hand all the day to reach the heart of His chosen nation. But did they get it! The promises were all there, if only they obeyed the Lord. If they obeyed, then God would act on their behalf. He would do all that He promised!

"So, circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer. (Deuteronomy 10:16 NASB; also, Jeremiah 4:4)

"Moreover, the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. (Deuteronomy 30:6 NASB)

This points to the Lord's purpose in circumcision; it was meant to be a sign of a change of heart, not an outward cutting away of the flesh. Paul stresses this in Romans 2:9, Philippians 3:3, and Colossians 2:11.

"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart, I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jeremiah 31:31-34 NASB)

This is quoted in Hebrews 8 as the new covenant for the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

And I will also give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give to you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments and do them. (Ezekiel 36:26-27 LITV)

All these great promises were made clear to God's ancient people. Unfortunately, they missed the point, but this was no excuse. Paul, who was a diligent student of Hebrew scripture, took these truths, and more, and interpreted and incorporated them into his epistles as truth under the new covenant in Jesus, for those who are given the faith to believe.

Now, this brings us to chapter 11 and Paul's closing defense of Israel.

12. I am an Israelite

Paul seems to come to a crescendo in his angst over all that he has laid out about Israel. You can just hear Paul's heart cry for his people that seemed to be tormenting his soul. He proclaimed that he was a believing Israelite.

I say then, did not God thrust away His people? Let it not be! For I also am an Israelite, out of Abraham's seed, of the tribe of Benjamin. "God did not thrust away His people" whom He foreknew. Psa. 94:14 Or do you not know what the Scripture said in Elijah, how he pleaded with God against Israel, saying, (Romans 11:1-2 LITV)

Lord, "they killed Your prophets," "and they dug down Your altars," "and only I am left, and they seek my life." 1 Kg. 19:10 But what does the Divine answer say to him, "I reserved to Myself seven thousand men who did not bow a knee to Baal." 1 Kg. 19:18 So then, also in the present time a remnant according to election of grace has come into being. But if by grace, no longer is it of works; else grace no longer becomes grace. But if of works, it is no longer grace; else work is no longer work. (Romans 11:3-6 LITV)

Paul was living proof that there is a remnant, much like in the days of Elijah. I wonder if Paul had the exact same experience as Elijah did. I can see Paul talking to the Lord: "Lord, am I one of the only ones left?" And, the Lord answers: "I always have My 7,000, even if it appears contrary to what is seen in the natural. Remember Elijah!" As in Elijah's day, in the midst of declension, these are the Lord's conquerors.

But a word of caution. Some use the above verses to support a doctrine that says there is a remnant within the believing body of Christ. Paul makes no such assertion. Clearly, he is referring to a remnant of Israelites in his day and not a remnant within the church in our day.

It does seem that Paul was faced with some type of replacement theology ("Israel is totally out of the picture; we gentiles have it all now") in his day, or perhaps, the holy spirit was looking down the road to when this theology would surface and need to be challenged.

The message to us today is—don't get cocky as if you think you are so special that there is no one else out there. God knows what He is doing, and He always has His chosen that He is using to work out His plan to achieve His ultimate purpose of all in love. Today, it could be 7,000, 7 million, or 700 million, for all we know. Eventually, it will be all 7 billion and more!

Later, Paul also adds to this—don't get cocky towards those who say they are Jews but are not. They are in unbelief just as you were. Make them jealous in a loving way that they are without Israel's Messiah who died for them and is now alive, seated at the right hand of the throne of glory. *Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either* (Romans 11:21). This is stressed in the next point.

13. Some Chosen, Some Hardened

What then? That which Israel seeketh after, the same, it hath not obtained:—the election, however, have obtained it, and, the rest, have been hardened;— Even as it is written—God hath given unto them a spirit of stupor,—eyes not to see, and ears not to hear,—until this very day (Romans 11:7-8 Rotherham)

I am saying, then, do they not trip that they should be falling? May it not be coming to that! But in their offense is salvation to the nations, to provoke them to jealousy." (Romans 11:11 CLV)

It seems that Paul was dealing with some who were looking down upon the Jews (here I will use the word since he was in the midst of Jews), much like how the Jews looked down upon the gentiles when they (Jews) were the apparent favored. It is as if Paul is saying: "No! don't do that, we need to make them jealous, so that they will turn and be saved." This was Paul's heart—*if somehow, I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them*. His countrymen's rejection is the conciliation of the world—that is, the Lord has made peace with the entire world, broken down all barriers to His presence, and ultimately made way for all to come to Him, not just a chosen ethnic group. God has made peace with you—all of you—now you make peace with God. When there is peace between God and man, it is called *reconciliation*. Both have accepted the peace treaty. Let the world know this great truth! This is the glory of the good news. The door is now wide open to enter through the Door.

Unfortunately for the Jews of our day, they continue to fight against peace, literally with their neighbors, as they reject God's Son, Yeshua.

For if their casting away is the *conciliation* of the world, what will the taking back be if not life from among the dead? (Romans 11:15 CLV)

So that, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive passed by. Lo! there has come new!" Yet all is of God, Who conciliates us to Himself through Christ, and is giving us the dispensation of the *conciliation*, how that God was in Christ, *conciliating* the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them, and placing in us the word of the conciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:17-19 CLV)

And He is the Head of the body, the ecclesia, Who is Sovereign, Firstborn from among the dead, that in all He may be becoming first, for in Him the entire complement delights to dwell, and through Him to *reconcile* all to Him (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens." And you, being once estranged and enemies in comprehension, by wicked acts, yet now He *reconciles*" (Colossians 1:18-21 CLV)

However, to do this, the Lord hardened those who were not of the remnant of Israel. I believe this was essential for the gospel to go forth unhindered. If the eyes of all the Jews in Paul's day were opened, it would have been near impossible for them to accept the gentiles as co-equals. Even the early church struggled with this and had to deal with believing Jews that were still

holding to the old covenant way. The book of Hebrews faced this challenge head on. Christianity would never have been set free from Judaism without God removing the prejudices of that day that were very powerful forces against the inclusiveness of the gospel message. (What about the prejudices of our day? What will God do to remove these, even from among His people?) This is also why I believe the Lord had to burn Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD. Is God unjust? As Paul proclaims: No! I will share my view how this all works out as I conclude this article.

14. Rich Root of the Olive Tree

For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too. (Romans 11:15-16 NASB)

Paul continued to hold out hope for his brethren that came from a holy lump and a holy root with holy branches. Here is where Paul interjects the metaphor of the rich root of the olive tree with its holy branches. It is interesting that Paul gives no forewarning or any indication of this olive tree in any of his other letters. Why? Because it is a necessary defense of the salvation of Israel, and this is the only place that he makes such a defense.

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." (Romans 11:17-19 NASB)

There is no question about the root of the olive tree. It is safe and secure. In scripture, the first intimation of the olive tree is discovered during the flood when Noah sent out a dove from the ark, and it returned with an olive leaf. This makes the olive tree almost as old, if not as old, as the tree of life. In fact, the dove came back on the eighth day, signifying new birth, new life, and new creation. In this sense, it makes the tree of life and the olive tree very similar—metaphorically, they both speak of life. For an interesting history of the olive tree, I refer you to a study I did of the olive tree.

See *Olive Tree in Scripture* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art34.pdf>

From this study, I believe Paul took his metaphor from Nehemiah.

When Nehemiah and a remnant of Judah returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and the temple (534-515 BC), Ezra the scribe was asked to bring forth the book of the law of Moses which the Lord had given Israel. On the first day of the seventh month, the law began to be read to the people. On the second day, they found written in the words of the law that in the seventh month they were to live in booths, celebrating the feast of booths or tabernacles (Nehemiah 8:1-2, 14) as a sign of coming out of the wilderness and into the promised land. As a reminder, as Stephen testified before the high priest, he referred to Israel as *the ecclesia (church) in the wilderness* (Acts 7:38). This should cause some pause for those who teach *replacement theology*. Today, we who believe are in a long line of those who had faith all the way back to Abraham. Of course, the

sons of Israel often suffered from a lack of faith, but there were at least two men who had faith to believe the Lord when He told them to go and take the land, namely Joshua and Caleb.

So, they proclaimed and circulated a proclamation in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the hills, and bring olive branches and wild olive branches, myrtle branches, palm branches and branches of other leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written." (Nehemiah 8:15 NASB)

Olive branches weren't the only branches used to make the booths; however, the olive tree was the only one identified with two types of branches, one was simply called *olive branches* and the other *wild olive branches*.

It appears that the olive branches came from the domesticated or, as Paul calls them (Romans 11:17, 24), cultivated olive trees, and the wild olive branches came from trees that appear in the wild, not in the cultivated orchards. The NASB uses the term *wild olive branches* but other translations refer to them as *branches from the oil trees*, *branches from beautiful wood*, *pine branches*, or *branches of field olives*.

The Greek word for a *wild olive tree* is *agrielaos*, which comes from the Greek word *agrios*, meaning "living in the fields," and *agrios* comes from the Greek word *agros*, meaning "a field." Thus, the wild olive tree is one that exists in a field. This links Paul's *wild olive tree* to Nehemiah's (8:15) branches from *field olives* or an *olive tree in the field*. It also ties in with Jesus' parable about the treasure hidden in the field where the man (Jesus) bought the field (the whole world) and hid His treasure in the world (Matthew 13:44).

15. British Christians in Rome

To add another dimension to the wild olive tree, let us consider who Paul was writing to in Rome. It is a safe assumption that most people think Paul was writing to Romans, but this may not be entirely accurate. Paul wrote to all that are in Rome, called to be saints (Romans 1:7), so his intended readers were those in one specific city, not the entire country or empire, and who were saved by grace through faith (i.e., Christians). In other words, Paul was not trying to reach the lost in Rome, but was trying to teach, encourage, and exhort the believers in Rome. History reveals that all the Jews and Christians had been expelled from Rome six years prior to Paul writing this letter, so his audience had to be rather small. History also indicates that his audience was most likely a royal family from the British Isles that had been converted by Joseph of Arimathea (Jesus' great uncle) who took up residence in Cornwall, England shortly after the crucifixion of Christ (~35-36 AD). This Christian family was subsequently captured and brought to Rome, and this is who Paul wrote to and identified as wild olive branches.

However, there are two more pieces of evidence that give more specificity to the identity of these British Christians. First, the words *Britain* and *British* come from Hebrew phrases that mean "covenant land" and "covenant people," respectively, and the British language in those days was a form of ancient Hebrew. This alone indicates that the British Isles were more than likely populated in the past by Hebrews. Second, the Sonnini Manuscript, a very old copy of the book of Acts, contains a 29th chapter that is not included in our bibles. Some call it the lost chapter of

Acts. Whether we accept this or not, it does seem to offer some valuable insight to Paul's Romans epistle and fits nicely into the migration of the Israelites out of Assyria and into Europe.

For he had heard in Phoenicia that certain of the children of Israel, about the time of the Assyrian captivity, had escaped by sea to "the isles afar off," as spoken by the prophets, and called by the Romans, Britain. And the Lord commanded the gospel to be preached far hence to the Gentiles [i.e., *ethnos*, nations], and to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. (Sonnini)

Putting all this together, an argument could be made that Paul wrote his epistle to British Christians from the genealogical lost sheep of the house of Israel, which he identified as wild olive branches grafted back into the cultivated olive tree by their conversion. In other words, the lost sheep of the house of Israel had become branches of a wild olive tree when it broke the covenant with the Lord and were scattered among the nations. They were broken off (pruned) from the green olive tree (Jeremiah 11:16) or the cultivated olive tree and its rich root of the Abrahamic covenant. They were cast into the field (i.e., world) and their national identity as *Israel* taken from them.

Whether one agrees with this or not, it is clear that the field olives most accurately and prophetically describe the wild olives that began to be grafted into the Lord's cultivated olive tree, especially beginning with Jesus' inaugural arrival, nearly 600 years after Nehemiah.

I am coming back to all this line of thought, but first we need to look at one more issue that Paul raises.

According to Paul's gospel, believers, regardless of their natural roots, are grafted into the rich root of the olive tree as branches. Those in Paul's day who believed, such as Paul, had no need to be grafted in; they were already rooted in the tree. Although, I would argue that they too had to be grafted back in. Why? This tree was far greater than any of the forefathers recognized, although the prophets said it would happen—it was open to all, and the eyes of the natural branches had to be opened to this reality. I wonder if the cross severed all the olive tree's branches from its root so that the tree had a fresh start, so to speak. Don't make a doctrine out of this. Just a thought! We are only dealing with a metaphor here, and metaphors can only go so far.

Those from among the nations are the wild olive branches. Those who were/are the natural descendants are the cultivated branches. In Paul's day, the so-called *gentiles* who believed were grafted in; Paul's fellow brethren who started out in unbelief and then believed were grafted back in as cultivated branches. But what about the many descendants down through the last two millennia that were given the faith to believe, are they cultivated branches or wild branches? I submit that once the good news went forth to the nations, metaphorically speaking, most of the graftage involved wild olive branches, along with some Jews. The sons of Israel that had gone into dispersion were no longer identified as carrying the name *Israel* and, after many centuries, even before the cross, their generational memory no longer accounted for their heritage back to Israel. It was like a witness protection program. They were given new identities and new locations in the world. They had become part of the gentiles as wild olive branches. Again, they were

gentilized! After a while their descendants no longer knew their roots. This is particularly acute in our day! However, it was out from these gentilized ones that many believers were birthed.

However, I want to stress that I am reading this into Paul's letter. He doesn't explain himself to the detail that I am proposing. Paul was dealing with the immediate issue of his day, not so much 2,000 years down the road; although, he does inject *until the fullness of the nations comes in*—obviously, a future event. Yet, it seems that Paul's entire concern was his brethren in that day, and these were mostly the Jews in the Roman empire. He has left us some large blanks to fill in, which is not unusual.

16. Breaking Branches Off

Paul then introduces something that makes one wonder if he was making a doctrine about losing one's salvation.

I know what you'll say next: "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." That's all very well. They were broken off because of unbelief—but you stand firm by faith. Don't get big ideas about it; instead, be afraid. After all, if God didn't spare the natural branches, there is a strong possibility he won't spare you. Note carefully, then, that God is both kind and severe. He is severe to those who have fallen, but he is kind to you, provided you continue in his kindness—otherwise you too will be cut off. And they, too, if they do not remain in unbelief, will be grafted back in. God is able, you see, to graft them back in. For if you were cut out of what is by nature, into a cultivated olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will they, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree. (Romans 11:19-24 Kingdom NT)

What is Paul doing here? Is he introducing a doctrine that says believers can lose their salvation? Is he saying that ones who are cut off as branches are lost again? Do you mean they don't go to heaven, they go to hell when they die (bad doctrine, by the way)? How can he do this to us; after all, we are told that we are safe and secure and there is no chance of us falling away? I purposely state these questions this way for a reason. I believe it is safe to state that many who read scripture read their doctrine into it, or they think everything has to be put into some systematized doctrine or school of thought. We all do this to some degree!

I am not convinced that Paul was introducing a doctrine, new or otherwise. This is not the purpose of this section of Romans. What he is doing is what he does best—warning believers not to go back to a previous state. Practically all his letters have a two-pronged approach—Paul presents the glory of the good news and then encourages his readers to press on in this good news and not turn back to the old ways. Put off, put on! When you go back to the old, you are robbing yourself of all the benefits there are in Christ Jesus—the kindness of God. Is it possible for people to return to a state of unbelief? This is not the first place that Paul uses a conditional if clause.

And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—if indeed you continue in the faith firmly

established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. (Colossians 1:21-23 NASB)

Again, Paul does not introduce a doctrine about losing salvation by reverting to unbelief. Fact of the matter is that he says nothing about what happens if one doesn't continue in the faith, except, perhaps, one won't be presented holy and blameless and beyond reproach. But he leaves it here without further elaboration, and so will I.

Staying on point, following Paul's line of logic that Israelites were cut off from the olive tree due to unbelief, it might seem that we have to conclude that salvation is in jeopardy for branches that are cut off. *They were broken off for their unbelief... for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either ... if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off ... if they (natural Israelites) do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted back in, for God is able to graft them in again.*

Except there is one glaring issue in Paul's logic. What is puzzling is that Paul never says that the nations are cut off due to unbelief; what he does say is that they are cut off for not continuing in the kindness of God. It is always unbelief for the natural branches, but it is not continuing in kindness for the wild branches. What are we to make of this? Returning to unbelief and not continuing in God's kindness seem to be two different concepts.

Perhaps, we are asking the wrong question. It seems to me that either bad or unnecessary doctrine comes out of asking the wrong question. For example, we ask: Can I lose my salvation? When we should be asking: How do I press on toward the goal? How do I gain more of Christ? How do I put off the old and put on the new? But I find after a while even these questions give way to a heart cry—Lord, I long to know you more. I long for greater union with you. I long to be filled with your love, your peace, your joy. I long that in every situation the world sees your life in me.

Why do we even ask about losing salvation in the first place? Why is this so important? Why do we need a doctrine about it? It is the wrong question because in its own right it is questioning the keeping power of the victory of Christ. When such a question is asked, it is as if one is asking how to get away with living in the world while claiming Christ at the same time.

Are we to conclude that Paul does not clearly address what happens to the wild olive branches that are cut off, at least, in terms of salvation? I say, let us not be so hasty to reach this conclusion. I see a much better and glorious answer to the question in Paul's concluding remarks of Romans 11. It is discovered in the inclusive word *ALL!* Be patient!

At any rate, let us not concern ourselves over being pruned out or cut off as a useless branch that bears no fruit. Instead, let us *press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 3:14). Let us not look back, but let us look off unto Jesus and continually and progressively enter ever deeper into His kingdom, which is life and love and peace and righteousness, and the list goes on.

17. A Mystery

Paul tells us that there is a mystery—this is what he has been driving toward all along. The wild olive branches need to know this mystery so that they will not get ahead of the Lord, so to speak, and think more highly of themselves than they ought. In his other epistles, Paul often warns about exalting oneself above others. This mystery involves the Israel of God. Consequently, we must know what Paul means when he writes of Israel. We cannot avoid it, and we must not distort it!

This mystery is three-fold—part of Israel has been hardened, much like Pharaoh was hardened; the fullness of the nations has to come in; and Israel has to be saved. So, let us take up each part. Several translations of the same verses are presented to hone in on what Paul is saying.

For I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be wise within yourselves, that hardness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the nations comes in; and so all Israel will be saved, even as it has been written, "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins." Isa. 59:20, 21 (Romans 11:25-27 LITV)

My dear brothers and sisters, you mustn't get the wrong idea and think too much of yourselves. That is why I don't want you to remain in ignorance of this mystery: a hardening has come for a time upon Israel, until the fullness of the nations comes in. That is how "all Israel shall be saved," as the Bible says: The Deliverer will come from Zion, and will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this will be my covenant with them, whenever I take away their sins. (Romans 11:25-27 Kingdom NT)

In this way all of Israel will be saved, as the Scriptures say, "From Zion someone will come to rescue us. Then Jacob's descendants will stop being evil." (Romans 11:26 CEV)

17. A. Hardening in Part

Part A—What part of Israel had been hardened to the gospel? Surely, it could not have been those of the ten tribes that had been scattered among the nations that had not yet received the gospel. Besides, James and Peter actually wrote letters to the twelve tribes in dispersion that were in areas of Asia. They were addressed as brethren of the faith. Scripture gives us no indication that there was a widespread rejection (or, acceptance) of the Messiah throughout the dispersed tribes. The answer is that Paul is addressing one component of Israel—the Jewish component that continually hounded him at every step of his ministry. Consider how Paul describes this lot.

For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost. (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 NASB)

These are the ones that Paul saw as part of Israel that was hardened—*the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus, and drove us out*. Given this, I believe we must conclude that Paul saw a part of the Jews continuing to be hardened to the gospel that extended beyond his day to the present. Do we not see Jews today that continue in the path of their forefathers as they reject, some vehemently, Jesus as Israel's Messiah? Recently, I watched a video in which a Jew was venomous toward Jesus to the point that he kept yelling he would never ever believe in Jesus. This is the part, the Jewish part, of Israel that is still hardened.

I do not see the rest of Israel, that is, the rest of the descendants of Israel—that do not know their roots—as part of this hardening. It can only apply to those today who call themselves *Jews*, for they alone claim Israelite roots (*aka* Jewish roots).

17. B. Fullness of the Nations

Part B—What does Paul mean by the fullness of the nations coming in? Many translations use the word *gentiles* instead of *nations*. By now, you should know that I do not agree with such an approach; it is too restrictive and biased in its meaning, which leads to leaving out the Israelite descendants that have been gentilized and don't know their roots.

Paul knew Hebrew scripture, probably better than most in his day and definitely more than all of us in our generation. The problem we face is that he didn't explain enough of what he knew. When he used the expression the *fullness of the nations*, he was drawing upon Jacob-Israel's blessing on Joseph's two sons, and this blessing was and is about sonship. Jacob-Israel adopted Joseph's two sons, and Paul picked up this theme in his epistles as he tells us we received the spirit of adoption as sons that will lead to the adoption, the redemption of our body, through resurrection and transfiguration (see Romans 8:15, 23; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5). God is after many sons, and to this end, Jesus is bringing many sons unto glory (Hebrews 2:10).

The Angel that redeemed me from every evil, may He bless the youths [*Ephraim and Manasseh; Joseph's sons*]; and *may my name [Israel] be called on them*, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they like the fishes increase into *a multitude* in the midst of the earth. (Genesis 48:16 LITV [added for clarity])

And his father refused and said, I know, my son, I know. He [*Manasseh*] also shall be a people, and he shall become great. But his younger brother [*Ephraim*] shall become greater than he, and *his seed* shall become *the fullness of the nations*. (Genesis 48:19 LITV [added for clarity; *Joseph's sons*])

Most translations use the word *multitude* in the place of *fullness*, but not all of them do. The Hebrew word means "fullness." Both sons received the blessing of carrying the name *Israel*, as well as the name of their grandfathers. However, Ephraim received the greater blessing, for from his seed would come the *fullness of the nations*, meaning nations would be associated with the name *Israel*. I see this as the Israel that Paul has in view in Romans. The fullness is comprised of physical Israelites that are not part of the hardening; they are gentilized wild olive branches, along with many other non-descendants of Israel from the nations on earth that have been

grafted in as well. Even in the days of the prophets, foreigners and strangers, were welcome into the house of Israel. This is God's plan!

Isaiah stated this glorious good news very clearly.

"Also the foreigners [from other nations] who join themselves to the LORD [salvation], to minister to Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, everyone who keeps from profaning the sabbath and holds fast My covenant [new covenant]; even those I will bring to My holy mountain [kingdom] and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; for My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples." The Lord GOD, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, "Yet others [from other nations] I will gather to them, to those already gathered." (Isaiah 56:6-8 NASB [added for emphasis])

But this glorious news goes back further to Solomon as he dedicated the temple.

"Also concerning the foreigner who is not of Your people Israel, when he comes from a far country for Your name's sake (for they will hear of Your great name and Your mighty hand, and of Your outstretched arm); when he comes and prays toward this house, hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know Your name, to fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by Your name. (1 Kings 8:41-43 NASB)

Notice the inclusiveness in both sets of verses. It is not merely about Israel; it is about ALL peoples. Israel was and is meant to be a blessing to ALL the nations of the earth.

But it all goes back even further, starting with the promise to Abraham.

The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed? (Genesis 18:17-18 NASB)

Solomon, Ezekiel, and others simply repeated or reaffirmed the truth that God has always intended to bless ALL the nations and ALL the families of the earth, and His plan calls for doing this through His peculiar treasure, now known as the *Israel of God*, that, in a sense, continues to be hidden in the world (field). The world continues to look at the little nation in the Middle East as the true Israel, but the true Israel is actually the Christian ecclesia that Christ is building. Most Christians do not seem to know this truth themselves, especially among the dispensationalists that prop up the Jewish state.

Pulling all this together, the only ones that could be grafted in as cultivated olive branches (not wild ones) are those who are of Jewish descent and claim to be so. Keep in mind that God has not completely hardened all Jews throughout history, for a remnant of Jews has been grafted in from Calvary to the present. There are many testimonies of Jews converting to Israel's Messiah, having faith in Yeshua. Some even claim that Messiah has appeared to them.

This is how it has been for most of the two millennia since Paul's day. Consequently, *until the fullness of the nations comes in* means that God has a definite goal in mind that, when reached, things change once again, and this change comes about with the consummational arrival of Jesus, the Messiah of Israel, the Deliverer, and the Savior of the world, and I must add, the love of our life—not only ours but of the whole world and of all humanity.

17. C. All Israel Saved—A New Mold

Before explaining my view of this part, a word about how some others see it. There is a specific school of thought that sees the fullness of the nations and all Israel saved as two separate processes and events—the so-called *gentiles* (non-Jews) must first be grafted in, implying God has a number which He is driving toward, then after all the gentiles are brought into the kingdom, God turns to the physical nation of Israel on earth at the time and grafts them back into the olive tree and establishes them as the head of the nations on earth for one-thousand years. Of course, there are various permutations and extensions of this thinking, so this is just the broad stroke of this school. I offer a different view as follows.

Part C—*That is how all Israel will be saved!* This particular translation captures the heart of the matter. It could also be worded as—*in such a manner; by such a process; thus, by this means; and in the way described*. These are simply different ways of saying that Israel will be saved by the ingrafting process that Paul is describing, and that the fullness of the nations is the ingrafted Israel of God. The fullness of the nations and the salvation of Israel are one and the same process and result. When the process of drawing all unbelievers, regardless of background, out of the world and into Jesus the Messiah of Israel, then the full complement of Christ will have arrived, and all the called-out ones will openly manifest the kingdom of God to the nations of the world. This is how Israel is saved. It is the way that unbelievers down through the centuries have come into Christ and have become known as *Christians*, *Christ-abiders!* This is the true Israel of God.

For those who say that this cannot be so, for we have nothing to do with Israel—it is apparent that Jesus and His apostles saw it differently. Argue with them!

Jesus spoke of a time when there would be an expansion of God's people coming from east and west (Matthew 8:11). Further, He likened the constraints of Judaism and the old covenant to old wineskin that could not contain His message of the inclusiveness of His kingdom without the skin bursting (Matthew 9:17). The remedy was to bring forth a new wineskin that not only could but does hold His message (new wine) as explained by the new covenant and embodied in the new covenant ecclesia, which is God's Israel—a theme picked up by Paul.

As for me, God forbid that I should boast—except in the cross of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. Circumcision, you see, is nothing; neither is circumcision! What matters is *new creation*. Peace and mercy on everyone who lines up by that standard—yes, on *God's Israel*. (Galatians 6:14-16 Kingdom NT [bold italic added])

Some claim that Paul has two separate groups in mind—the church and Israel. How could this be since Paul was continually battling the Jewish component of Israel in his day that rejected Christ

or wanted to integrate Him into Judaism? Why would he tack Israel onto a verse that is about a new creation that Paul clearly states is based on all the barriers of distinction being broken down? It is contrary to his entire argument made to the Galatians. The Jews of Israel were not lining up with this standard; they were fighting against it. Consequently, the only rightful conclusion to the matter is that God's Israel is a new creation, something he also reiterated to the Corinthians.

So that we, from now on, are acquainted with no one according to flesh. Yet even if we have known Christ according to flesh, nevertheless now we know Him so no longer." So that, if anyone is in Christ, there is ***a new creation***: the primitive passed by. Lo! there has come new!" (2 Corinthians 5:16-17 CLV [bold italic added])

Paul clears the flesh right off the table and into the trash can to be burned up. The only thing that matters is being in Christ, and those in Christ are a new creation, and this new creation is God's Israel! I see no way around this conclusion unless one wants to read into Paul's words a foreign doctrine.

To round out this view, consider this—the apostles took old testament themes regarding ancient Israel and applied them to the ecclesia that Jesus is building. In other words, they, especially Paul, identified early Christianity using terms associated historically with ancient Israel and the privileges afforded them. Another way to state this is that they picked up themes that carried forward from the old to the new Israel of God. Examples include—*the seed of Abraham* (Romans 4:13-17; Galatians 3:6-9, 29); *the circumcision* (Romans 2:28-29; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:11); *the baptism* (1 Corinthians 10:2; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12); *the temple of God* (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21-22; Revelation 21-22); *living stones being built into a spiritual house* (Ephesians 2:21-22; 1 Peter 2:5); *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation* (1 Peter 2:9-10); *a people for God's own possession* (Ephesians 1:14; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:10). Further, both Jesus and Paul gave strong words for ones calling themselves Jews (outwardly) but do not believe in Israel's Messiah (inwardly) (Romans 2:28; Revelation 2:9; 3:9). And, let us not forget New Jerusalem, for the present Jerusalem has been cast out (Galatians 4:21-31; Revelation 21-22). Thus, old covenant language associated with historical Israel was highlighted and spiritually associated with a remolded (*all things new*) Israel, during the embryonic stage of Christianity. Jeremiah prophesied of this.

An All Things New Vessel

Earlier, I said we would return to Jeremiah, and so we must.

Rise, and you have gone down [to] the potter's house, and there I cause you to hear My words;" and I go down [to] the potter's house, and lo, he is doing a work on the stones, and marred is the vessel that he is making, as clay in the hand of the potter, and he has turned and he makes it ***another vessel***, as it was right in the eyes of the potter to make." And there is a word of Yahweh to me, saying:" As this potter am I not able to do to you? O house of Israel, an affirmation of Yahweh. Lo, as clay in the hand of the potter, So [are] you in My hand, O house of Israel." (Jeremiah 18:2-6 CLV [bold italic added])

Yahweh of the old, which is Yeshua-Jesus of the new, told the house of Israel that He would be like a potter to them. He would take them into His hand, as if they were clay and mold them into another vessel, different in character or nature from the one they were at first. They were marred; they needed a new look, so to speak. In other words, He would make a new house of Israel, a remodeled one, and He did just that with His first arrival and departure through the cross, grave, and resurrection. Then, forty or so years later, He put the final nail in the coffin of the old Israel and God's Israel, the new remolded Israel God always intended to have was set free from Judaism to rise into what we call *Christianity*. Israel is now solidly based in Yeshua, not according to flesh, but according to faith! And, this constitutes the multitude of nations promised to Abraham, the father of nations; those who follow in the steps of his faith (Romans 4:12)!

18. The Deliverer Rescues

Paul reinforces the idea that scripture foresaw this as he quotes from Isaiah 59:20-21.

And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." (Romans 11:26-27 ESV)

Jesus is the Deliverer! He came as such in His first arrival, which was inaugural, and He delivered a remnant of Israelites, predominantly Jews. And, He is coming a second time, which will be consummational, to deliver the rest. Paul is speaking of the Jews that have been hardened. Based on the prophet, a day is coming when even the part of Israel (the Jews) that had been hardened will be delivered by Jesus the Messiah. This is the hope of Israel.

Given this, I believe this is the reason there is an Israel, even though misnamed, in the Middle East today. There has to be a recognized Jewish people (not so much Israelite) in the world when Jesus returns in His second manifestation—not to become the head of the nations with Judaism in full bloom and Christ in its midst, but to be engrafted back into the cultivated olive tree that they have been broken off of for nearly 2,000 years to the present. They have been living a lie, and it will be time for the spirit of the Lord to reveal the truth that they have not been able to see due to blindness (another common theme from the prophets and repeated by Jesus and Paul). In that day, they will be set free into the freedom of the Anointed One, the one their forefathers, the Jews, demanded to be crucified! In that day, they will join the true Israel of God made up of ethnic and non-ethnic Israelites—all on equal footing; all from one root, one foundation—Messiah Yeshua-Jesus.

19. Gifts and Calling Not Subject to Recall

From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers (Romans 11:28 NASB)

For God's gracious gifts and calling (invitation) [are] unregretted (not to be regretted afterward; are not subject to recall; are never taken back). (Romans 11:29 JM-NT)

Paul knew all too well that the Jews in his day were enemies of those who came into the truth. To the Philippians, he called them *enemies of the cross* (Philippians 3:18). Today, the unbelieving Jews in the world are these same enemies. The good news for them, however, is that once God promises something, in this case gifts and calling, He does not take any of it back. He fully intends to see it through.

Interestingly, Caiaphas, the high priest in the year of Jesus' crucifixion, gave a prophecy: *He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad* (John 11:49-52). Adding to this, as Paul wrote: *If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches* (Romans 11:16). And: *But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep* (1 Corinthians 15:20).

Pulling all this together makes for the case that the gifts and calling are not subject to recall. Jesus died for Israel as a nation, as well as for all the world. Israel's root is found in the rich root of the olive tree—its holiness is to engulf all of the branches. Why? Because Jesus is the firstfruits of a tremendous crop to follow.

Paul reminds us that by God's choice the Jews are beloved for the sake of the fathers or patriarchs. He is harkening back to the promise to Ephraim-Israel that his seed would be a fullness of nations, which is simply a restatement of the promise to Abraham to be the father of a multitude of nations. As Paul stressed earlier, God has not forgotten the Jews, they are part of God's plan. They have been hardened for a reason—to allow for the fullness of the nations promised to the patriarchs. But the day must and will come for them to be "unhardened" so that they too can and will come into this calling. This is all by God's grace. When this happens, they enter into the fullness promised to the patriarchs. But let us not forget that God has not forgotten the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Literally, God has forgotten no one!

But if their slipping away is the riches of the world, and their default the riches of the nations, how much more their fullness? (Romans 11:12 LITV)

This will be to the glory of God and will be the gracious manifestation of His justice.

If God's gift and calling are irrecoverable, meaning God does not take back what He gives, then how does He fulfill this and be true to Himself? What are the gifts and calling? I believe they go back to Abraham and the promises the Lord made to him to bless all the families of the earth and to have a multitude of nations. The same calling was placed upon Ephraim-Israel to have a multitude or fullness of nations, and this leads us right back to Paul and all Israel will be saved. Saved how? Through the promises to Abraham that cannot and will not be taken back. They were unconditional then, and they are unconditional now.

This might best fit someplace else in this article, but this begs for a question that never seems to be answered in light of Paul's message. What happened or happens to the descendants of Israel (all twelve tribes) that have died without faith throughout history? Do the promises to Abraham and Ephraim-Israel work for them as well?

The traditional answer that most Christians would undoubtedly offer, for they have been taught nothing else, is the heaven-hell doctrine that most dispensationalists and evangelicals adhere to—these descendants are roasting and toasting in a fiery place called *hell*. Then, what Israel is saved? Are only those who are alive when the Lord comes saved and the rest have already been cast into hell? If so, then it appears we are back to the remnant scenario, not some scenario where *all* Israel is saved. And, don't tell me that *all* is not truly *all*; or it only applies to some smaller subset of a whole, such as all the remnant. I have heard these arguments before in other doctrines that refuse to accept that the Lord might actually mean *all* when He says *all*.

How does God balance the books, so to speak, in a just way that answers to the irrevocable gifts and calling? Based on my studies, no one seems to even attempt to reconcile any of this, especially among the dualists or dispensationalists. You either go to heaven or to hell, or if you are a physical *Jew* living at the end of the age, you are given faith so you can live on the land and perform memorial animal sacrifices in the presence of the one and only final Sacrifice, Jesus. What of the rest that died without faith or were never exposed to the good news, are they not included in Abraham's covenant? Has the Lord cast them all out? What happens to them—the fiery torture forever and ever? I reject this as contrary to God is love.

I realize that the traditional answer is that it is all settled at the great white throne judgment. However, according to most teaching on the second death, people who are cast into the lake of fire are gone forever, either annihilated or are tortured forever. Given this, it looks to me like the cross is an absolute failure, for Christ's death and resurrection could only save some of humanity, including some of Israel, but not all, and this points back to the promises to Abraham only selectively fulfilled, at best. What is the answer? Well, there are two ways to answer this.

20. God Locks Up All Together

For God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all." (Romans 11:32 CLV)

Paul gives a similar word to the Galatians.

But the Scripture locked up all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to the ones believing. (Galatians 3:22 LITV)

As Paul drives forward, he comes to a climatic proclamation. God locks up all in stubbornness! This all is an inclusive all. He doesn't leave anybody out. ALL of us are locked up. All of us gentiles, all of us nations, all of us Jews, and all of us Israelites (whether we know our roots or not). So, don't be too proud of yourself if you believe. In God's eyes, we all start from the same point, stubbornness, in our sin. God imprisons all of us! Although this is a negative, we must see it in the positive, for this is what Paul really wants to tell us as he concludes this portion of his Roman's letter.

21. Salvation of All

The conclusion is that in God's purpose, we all come to the same glorious endpoint, which is not really an end—it is a new beginning. I don't believe God's new creation ever stops being new; it is new beginnings after new beginnings. I leave this for your imagination!

O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways!" For, who knew the mind of the Lord? or, who became His adviser? or, who gives to Him first, and it will be repaid Him? seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen! (Romans 11:32-36 CLV)

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:36 NASB)

Because, forth from out of the midst of Him, and through the midst of Him (or: through means of Him), and into the midst of Him, [is] the whole (everything; [are] all things)! By Him (In Him; To Him; For Him) [is] the glory (the manifestation of that which calls forth praise; the reputation; the notion; the opinion; the credit; the splendor) into the ages. It is so (Amen; So be it)! (Romans 11:36 JM-NT)

Again, it seems that Paul is beside himself, only this time it is not in angst, but in wonderment and amazement at the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. There is no despair in Paul; it is all gone. Who knew the mind of the Lord? Obviously, few in Paul's day knew it, and it is debatable how many of us in our day truly know it.

What did he see that was so marvelous? Well, it is discovered in his closing proclamation: *For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.*

All things are from Him—nothing is left out, not the unbelieving Jews, the lost ten tribes of Israel, nor the gentiles or nations. They all come from God.

All things are through Him—nothing is left out, not the unbelieving Jews, the lost ten tribes of Israel, nor the gentiles or nations. Everything that is comes through God's Son who is all in all.

All things return to Him—nothing is left out, not the unbelieving Jews, the lost ten tribes of Israel, nor the gentiles or nations. All things return to God is love as He is making all things new! When all is said and done at the consummation of the ages, then God will have reached His ultimate purpose of being ***all in all*** (1 Corinthians 15:28 [bold italic added]).

Paul had a similar word for the Corinthians.

For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. (1 Corinthians 8:5-6 ESV)

This is one of the most comprehensive statements in scripture pertaining to the Father and the Son and all things.

God's plan has been and continues to be to reach ALL the nations on earth, reconciling ALL things to Himself and, ultimately, bringing ALL mankind into His house, until ALL Israel is saved. This is the plan!

It starts with Abraham called to be a blessing to ALL families on earth. Today, ALL who belong to Christ are Abraham's spiritual descendants; or, put another way, those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer (Galatians 3:9, 29). Ultimately, ALL humanity will come into this blessing as well, through the same Door.

Then, the Lord called Israel to be a priestly nation to ALL nations, and He had Solomon build a temple as the house of prayer for ALL people. Then, the Lord cast off Israel and hid them in the world, so that, ultimately, they would be reunited in His kingdom along with ALL nations of the earth.

This is the glorious plan of God; it is the glorious gospel of God. Since Calvary, God has been progressively implementing His plan, starting with the Jews and moving to the nations from all tribes, tongues, and peoples, including the lost tribes of Israel that long ago lost their generational memory and became part of the nations, and concluding by opening the eyes of the Jews in the world. Thus, in this way, the way of grafting, all Israel will be saved.

Graftage is all about being grafted into God's Son, who is the true vine (another metaphor; John 15). It matters not what one's roots are; what matters is being in Christ and Christ being in us. Yeshua is the only root that matters. This is the ultimate destiny for all, for this is God's plan for humanity, for without it, God the Father cannot be all in all.

Why is all Israel saved? Because all humanity will be saved, not all at the same time, and possibly not all in the same manner, but all through God's Son and, we must not overlook as some do, through judgment. God is love knows how to render perfect justice to all. Only through love is His justice attained for all humanity.

God ... Who wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and mankind, a Man, Christ Jesus, Who is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all (the testimony in its own eras) (1 Timothy 2:4-6 CLV)

We are not told this anywhere in scripture, as far as I can tell, but I believe all humanity is destined to eventually become Israel, even if many have to go through the lake of fire, to remove all vestiges of self-centered flesh, until God's consuming fire has fully salted them and set them free to be sons of God centered in the Anointed Son. This is the glory and absolute success of the cross!

Dear brethren, the **good news of Jesus**, the Messiah of Israel, **is**—

- *Universal* (all in heaven and on earth)
- *International* (all nations)
- *Interracial* (all races, ethnics).

The fullness of the nations is **not bound by a**—

- *Race* (all are included)
- *Land* (the whole earth is included, for it is the Lord's)
- *Temple* made of bricks and mortar planted in the ground someplace (all of the Lord's people are bound up in Jesus the true Temple of God; thus, they too are part of the temple)
- *Ritualistic worship* (we worship in spirit and truth)
- *Religion* (all are bound up in God's Son in relationship—in union).

There are no barriers or distinctions in the kingdom of God. The way is wide open through the Door!

Let us glory in the magnificence of God's purpose and plan to be all and to have all in the Kingdom of the Son of His love!

O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways!" For, who knew the mind of the Lord? or, who became His adviser?

All Israel will be saved!