

May 8th, 2022

The Restoration of Israel and Revival of the Whole World

1 Corinthians 15:24; Romans 11:25-36

Imminent or contingent?

Out of all the messages I've taught in this series on eschatology, this is the one that I have been most looking forward to. Romans 11 is the clearest picture in the NT of God's plans for the future of mankind. So we'll start with this question this morning: Is there anything that has to happen before Jesus returns, or can Jesus simply return at any moment? I know that for most of my Christian life I have believed that Jesus can return at any moment. But may I suggest to you that is entirely wrong, and no school of eschatology actually teaches that Jesus can return at any moment. Please don't read it now, but there is an insert in your bulletin that demonstrates that every eschatology—be it premillennialism, amillennialism, or postmillennialism—teaches that somethings must take place first before Christ's second coming.

Diverse theologians: "All Israel will be saved"

The one event that all three eschatologies teach *must* happen before Christ returns is the theology of Romans 11, *namely* that one day the fullness of Israel will come to Christ (v.12); that she as a whole will be accepted by God (v.15); that Israel will be grafted back into the olive-tree (v.24); or as Paul sums it up in v.26 that "all Israel will be saved." Now I'm *not* saying that *every* theologian from the different eschatological schools believe this, *nor* am I saying that they all agree on the *timing* of this event, or the *nature* of Israel's place in redemptive history. What I am saying is that there are theologians from every camp that teach a great revival is yet to be accomplished for Israel as a national/ethnic people.

Historical Premillennialist Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892): “I think we do not attach sufficient importance to the restoration of the Jews. We do not think enough of it. But certainly, if there is anything promised in the Bible it is this. I imagine that you cannot read the Bible without seeing clearly that there is to be an actual restoration of the children of Israel.”

Amillennialist Martin Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981) “But I am equally impressed by Romans 11 which speaks of a great spiritual return among the Jews before the end time. While this seems to be developing, even something even more spectacular may be indicated.”

Postmillennialist Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) “Nothing is more certainly foretold than this national conversion of the Jews is in the eleventh chapter of Romans. And there are also many passages of the Old Testament that cannot be interpreted in any other sense.”¹

The greatest revival

So put on your theological guns down, because regardless of what eschatology you hold, there are theologians that belong to your school who are going to agree with much of what I’m saying this morning. Loved ones, Romans 11 teaches that there is a revival coming in the future the likes of which the world has never seen. So grand is this future work of God, that Paul cannot help but explode into praise when he speaks of it “Oh the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!” (**Romans 11:33**).

¹ All three quotes came from: <https://www.monergism.com/noted-theologians-history-who-believed-future-conversion-national-ethnic-israel> Accessed May 7, 2022.

The Big Idea...

Before the end God will pour out His covenant mercies on Israel and they will embrace the Savior and be grafted into the Church, and this will mean life from the dead for the world

☆ Our Doctrine

☆ Our Duty

☆ Our Delight

I. Our Doctrine

An organic connection

There is an organic and natural connection between what Paul says in **1 Corinthians 15:24** and what he says in Romans 11. Both chapters speak about what must take place before the end. **1 Corinthians 15:24** is but a brief summary, whereas Romans 11 is a clear explanation of what must take place. So turn with me to Romans if you are not already there.

The context of Romans 11

The context for Romans 11 really begins in Romans 8. In **Romans 8:38-39** Paul triumphantly declared that “nothing...will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” NOTHING! But *immediately* there is an objection: “what about the Jews? It *appears* that the whole nation of the Jews were separated from the love of God. If they were separated from God's love, how can we sure that we Gentiles won't be?” **Enter Romans 9.** Paul admits that though the Jews had all the privileges under the sun, God's Word has not failed. It is not a naked ethnicity is not what secures one in the love of God. “For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel” (v.6). Paul says “...it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the

children of the promise are counted offspring” (v.7).² **Enter Romans 10.** Paul says that though the Jews had a zeal for God, it was *not* according to knowledge. In v.3-4 he says “For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” They sought a righteousness based on the law (v.5) rather than one based on faith (v.6). In order to be included in the inseparable love of God, one must “...confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead” (v.9). This is what Israel as a whole refused to do.³ As a people group they rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, as we saw last week, Christ took the kingdom of God way from them, and gave it to a people producing its fruits (**Matthew 21:43**).

The first answer: “I have a remnant”

Enter Romans 11. Paul now answers the objection head on. In v.1 he says “I ask then, has God rejected his people?” In other words, has national/ ethnic Israel been separated from the love of God? Paul gives two answers. The **first answer** is found in v.1-6: God has always kept a remnant of Israel for Himself. This was true in OT Israel, v.4 “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” And it is true in the NT age. v.5 “So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.” This remnant will never be separated from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

² From Abraham's offspring, we see that it was Isaac not Ishmael that was counted as a child of promise (v.10), Jacob not Esau (v.13). Election - God's foundational work of grace that secures us in His inseparable love - is according to His sovereign free grace. "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy" (v.15) "It depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy" (v.16). Thus God has worked outside of ethnic Israel, pouring out His mercy Gentiles, pursuing them, though they were outside His OT covenant people. The Gentiles did not pursue righteousness, but they attained it because of God's promiscuous mercy. The Jews did pursue righteousness, however not through faith in Christ, but rather through their own works (v.32). They stumbled over the stumbling stone (v.33).

³ Though this message has been published all over the world (v.18). Though God has held out His hands all day long, they proved to be a disobedient and contrary people (v.21).

The second answer: “I will restore Israel”

But Paul gives a **second answer** that is *most* astounding found in **v.11-36**: God is not done with national Israel, and before the end national/ethnic Israel will be saved. That brings us to **our doctrine** proper: *Before the end God will pour out His covenant mercies on Israel and they will embrace the Savior and be grafted into the Church, and this will mean life from the dead for the world.* To demonstrate this I want to examine *five truths* from Romans 11.

Truth #1: God’s plan for Israel’s apostasy was not her damnation

Look at **v.11** “So I ask, did *they* stumble in order that they might fall? [In other words, Paul is asking “...*was their great sin of rejecting Christ purposed by God so that Israel as a nation would be forever be cut off?*”] By no means! [The KJV here says it in the strongest terms “God forbid!” Israel’s unfaithfulness can never cancel out God’s faithfulness] Rather, *through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles*, so as to make Israel jealous.” Consider two of God’s glorious designs in Israel’s great sin. The **first design** is that through Israel’s apostasy, the gospel freely spread to the Gentiles. Calvin is quick to point out here that we should not conclude from this that our salvation as Gentiles “...depended on the ruin of the Jews.”⁴ Paul is not saying that Israel’s apostasy is “...the essential cause [of our salvation] but rather the occasion [for it].”⁵ Remember this is what Paul said to the Jews of his day in **Acts 13:46** “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy

⁴ John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. XIX*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 422. After all Paul is going to show in the next verse and in v.15 how Israel’s restoration will prove an even a greater blessing to the Gentiles.

⁵ Wilhelmus A Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service, Vol. 4: Ethics and Eschatology*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Reformation Heritage Books, 1995), pg. 515

of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.”⁶ The **second design** is that Israel would be made *jealous* as a result. Meaning that as the Jews see the manifold blessings of Jesus Christ poured out on the Gentiles they would be provoked to a holy jealousy to desire the same thing.⁷ Meditate on that for a moment. If God were absolutely done with Israel *as a people group*, why would He want to make them jealous?⁸ He’s provoking them to jealousy with the express purpose of bringing them back.

Truth #2: Israel’s full inclusion is prophesied as a future event

Look at v.12 “Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will *their full inclusion* [their fullness] mean!” This is so vital to see. Paul is *not* referring here to the remnant of Jewish believers who embraced Christ. He is talking about Israel as a national identity. As a whole, they were guilty of rejecting Christ. He’s making a lesser to greater argument. If Israel’s national sin led to Christ spreading to the cosmos—to the nations of the earth—how much more will Israel’s national restoration mean? Two things to see here. **First**, Paul is saying unequivocally that there is something greater is in store for the whole world. The nations

⁶ “The Jews, even those who were professors of Christianity, were, in the first place, very slow to allow the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles; and in the second, they appear almost uniformly to have desired to clog the gospel with the ceremonial observances of the law. This was one of the greatest hindrances to the progress of the cause of Christ during the apostolic age, and would, in all human probability, have been a thousand-fold greater, had the Jews, as a nation, embraced the Christian faith. On both of these accounts, the rejection of the Jews was incidentally a means of facilitating the progress of the gospel. Besides this, the punishment which befell them on account of their unbelief, involving the destruction of their nation and power, of course prevented their being able to forbid the general preaching of the gospel, which they earnestly desired to do. 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 “For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, ¹⁵ who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind ¹⁶ by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last!” Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on Romans: Geneva Series of Commentaries*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2020), pg. 361-362

⁷ That’s what Paul says in v.14, that he magnifies his gospel ministry among the Gentiles “...in order somehow to make my fellow Jews *jealous*, and thus save some of them.”

⁸ If you say “This makes some Jews jealous with the result of bringing them into the remnant, but this doesn’t prove a national/ethnic awakening of the Jews.” I answer, Paul has already addressed the issue of the remnant in v.1-5. Starting in v.7 he is specifically addressing Israel as a collective people group.

received riches in Christ when Israel sinned. How *much more* will the nations received when Israel is restored? Now he doesn't tell us what that is *yet*. That's coming. But that's the construction of his argument. **Second**, Paul is saying in no uncertain terms that Israel—as a national/ethnic people group—will one day experience *full inclusion*. Since A.D. 70 they have experienced *full exclusion*, but there is coming a day when they will experience *full inclusion*. Israel's future is not relegated to merely a remnant of believers, but a nation of believers.⁹

Truth #3: Israel's acceptance will result in a world wide revival

In v.13-14 Paul explains that He wants to convert as many Gentiles to Christ as possible—the meaning of *magnify*—so that he can make Israel jealous and save some of them. Why? Because he knows that when Israel is restored this will lead to an untold revival for the rest of the world. Look at v.15 “For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean *but life from the dead?*” This is yet another lesser to greater argument. So we must interpret the last clause as being far greater than the first. In first clause, the Gentile nations have learned of salvation in Christ. Millions upon millions have been reconciled to God. The last clause—“life from the dead”—must be a far greater blessing.¹⁰ So what is this greater blessing? What does it mean that the world will experience “life from the dead?” Some have suggested that “life from the dead” means the final resurrection. So the Jews experience a great national revival, millions of Jews turn to the Messiah, and then *immediately* comes the end—Jesus returns, and the final resurrection “*life from the dead*” occurs. Two problems with that interpretation. **First**, no where else in Scripture does the Greek phrase ζωή ἐκ νεκρός (“life from the dead”) ever refer to the final resurrection.¹¹ If Paul meant the final resurrection, then *why* would he use a

⁹ Paul “...envisions a situation when it is no longer a saved remnant but a saved mass.” John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: Eerdmans Classic Biblical Commentaries*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), pg. 94

¹⁰ “Whatever this result may be it must denote a blessing far surpassing in its proportions anything that previously obtained in the unfolding of God's counsel.” *Ibid*, pg. 82

¹¹ cf. Hodge, pg. 365-366 and Murray, pg.83

phrase that is no where else used to describe it? If this phrase means final resurrection, is an island to itself since no other place refers to resurrection in these terms. If Paul intended final resurrection, he could have used very familiar to language to indicate it. “If he meant the resurrection, *why* did he not say so?”¹² **Secondly**, to say “life from the dead” means resurrection violates Paul’s *lesser to greater* argument. The form of his argument has been this: “If *this Jewish loss* resulted in *this Gentile gain* then how much more will *this Jewish gain* result in *a greater Gentile gain*?” That’s the form. But “final resurrection” is not just a greater Gentile gain. It includes both Jew and Gentile. Additionally this wouldn’t be a benefit for *all* the Gentiles just the elect ones. So lexically and logically it doesn’t work to say “life from the dead” means final resurrection. What then does it mean? Does Paul use this phrase anywhere else? Yes in this very letter. Turn to **Romans 6:13**. Pauls says “Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as *those who have been brought from death to life*—ζάω ἐκ νεκρός.” The only difference here is the word for *life* is in it’s plural verb form (ζάω), whereas in **11:15** it’s in it’s singular noun form (ζωή). Other than that, it’s the exact same phrase! So what does Paul mean *here* by being “brought from death to life?” He means regeneration! New birth! Turn back to **Romans 11:15** “For if [Israel’s] rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean *but life from the dead?*” Global regeneration. Global revival. That’s the greater blessing that follows Israel’s restoration. Charles Hodge says here

¹² Hodge, pg. 366

“...it will be a most glorious event; as though a new world had risen¹³...the conversion of the Jews would be the occasion, or the means, of awakening many of the Gentiles to spiritual life.”¹⁴

The Dutch Theologian Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635-1711) says here:

“[This] will be a more eminent time than the age of the apostles. The church of the Gentiles will be so quickened and revived by the conversion of Israel that her former state will appear to be such as the difference between a dead and living person. The unconverted will be converted in great numbers, and the converted will become partakers of a wondrous increase in the measure of grace. Oh, what a glorious time this will be! Who will then be alive?”¹⁵

Though in its former state, the world included millions upon millions of Christians, its latter state will be far, far greater. When the Jews are called, the world will experience unprecedented revival.

Truth #4: Israel’s hardness of heart will one day cease

Look at **v.25** “Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this *mystery*, brothers: *a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*” Three things here. **First**, he doesn’t want us to be unaware or ignorant of this great *mystery*. He now openly declares what it is. But note this *mystery* is not something we could have deduced without him

¹³ cf. Isaiah 65:17-20

¹⁴ Hodge, pg. 365. Calvin's editor said this "...for to be dead sometimes means a religious declension, Revelation 3:1-2; or a state of oppression and wretchedness, as the case was with the Israelites when in captivity, Ezekiel 37:1-14; Isaiah 26:19. The phrase is evidently figurative, and signifies a wonderful revival, such as the coming to life of those in a condition resembling that of death. The restoration of the Jews unto God's favor will occasion the revival and spread of true religion through the whole Gentile world." Calvin, pg. 425. See also Murray, pg. 83

¹⁵ Brakel, pg. 516. Additionally Jonathan Edwards says here “...the world of the Gentiles shall be, as it were, revived from the dead after this...the kingdom of Christ shall be accomplished after the calling of the Jews, which shall be extensive, that it may be called a reviving of the world from the dead.” *The Power of God: A Jonathan Edwards Commentary on the Book of Romans*, Ed. by David S. Lovi & Benjamin Westerhoff, (Eugene, OR.: Pickwick Publications, 2013), pg. 251.

telling us. **Secondly**, he tells us what this *mystery* is—that the partial hardening that national/ethnic Israel has experienced (i.e. their rejection of Jesus Christ) has an expiration date. It will come to an end.¹⁶ **Thirdly**, the hardening of the Israel will terminate when “*the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*”¹⁷ What does this phrase: *fullness of the Gentiles* mean? Some have said this fullness of the Gentiles means *the final number of elect Gentiles then living*. But if that were the case, then that means no single Gentile could be saved when Israel experiences this great restoration. Wouldn’t that be strange that over the course of months or perhaps years of Israel’s revival not one Gentile would be converted? Does that seem like God’s way of dealing with man? Does that seem like the greater blessing for the Gentiles that v.12 speaks of? Furthermore, if no more Gentiles could be saved, then it undermines what Paul already said in v.15, *namely* that Israel’s restoration would mean “life from the dead”—regeneration—for the Gentile world. So then what does fullness of the Gentiles mean? It means a great multitude.¹⁸ When a great multitude of Gentiles come to Christ, then Israel’s hardening will come to an end. Remember Paul said in v.11 that “...salvation has come to the Gentiles, *so as to make Israel jealous.*” He wanted to magnify his ministry among the Gentiles (v.13)—bringing in multitudes of Gentile converts to Christ—in order to provoke the Jews to a holy jealousy (v.14). Therefore when a great multitude of Gentiles finally turn to the Lord—a great number predetermined by God, a fullness of Gentiles—then Israel will be made sufficiently jealous, and God will soften their hearts and they will then turn to the Lord.

¹⁶ “It was no mystery to anyone that during the times of the apostles a great multitude of the Jews believed in the Messiah. That was known to everyone. However, that this Israel, so hardened and hostile to the gospel, would once embrace in faith, and with love and joy, the very gospel they now so hated, seemed entirely improbably—nevertheless, this would transpire. It would not be the conversion of only a few—individuals here and there—but it would be a conversion of an entire nation.” Brakel, pg. 518

¹⁷ cf. Matthew 23:38-39 and Luke 21:24

¹⁸ Genesis 48:19 says “But his father refused and said, “I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude^[a] of nations.” The footnote tells us that the Hebrew for multitude is *fullness*. Ephraim’s descendants would not include each and every individual in the nations but would rather include a great multitude within the nations.

Truth #5: All Israel will be saved just as the prophets have said

Look at **v.26** “And in this way all Israel will be saved.” Stop. Some have said that “Israel” here simply refers to spiritual Israel—meaning God’s elect made of up both ethnic Jews and Gentiles. But that is, as both John Murray and F.F. Bruce have said, exegetically impossible.¹⁹ Three reasons why this must refer to national/ethnic Israel. **First**, as one commentator puts it “In these three chapters (Romans 9-11) the term “Israel” occurs no less than eleven times. And in the preceding ten case it refers indisputably to the Jews, in contrast with the Gentiles.²⁰ What compelling reason can there be, therefore to accept another meaning here?”²¹ **Second**, Paul already said in **v.12** that Israel as a national/ethnic people group would experience “full inclusion.” **Third**, Paul said in **v.25** that he didn’t want us Gentiles to be unaware of this great *mystery*. Is it a mystery that all the elect Jews and Gentiles would be saved? That’s no mystery. All of God’s elect are invincibly saved. But it is a great mystery that God would once again restore that nation that hated and crucified His only Son. Beloved,

¹⁹ Murray, pg. 96. Even the popular “Reformation Study Bible” edited by R.C. Sproul teaches that this means ethnic Israel. “He is showing how God will, in the future, bring such widespread salvation to the Jewish people that, in an obvious general sense, it can be said that “all Israel will be saved” (v. 26) ... some form of this last view seems most likely for the following reasons. First, hints of it seem to appear already in vv. 11, 12, 15, 16, 24. Second, v. 25 suggests that an end to the partial hardening of Israel is in view. Third, “Israel” in v. 26 is not naturally interpreted as signifying a different entity from the Israel in view in vv. 1–24 and vv. 28–31, where national Israel (not spiritual Israel) is in view. Fourth, “mystery” in v. 25 would seem inappropriate and exaggerated if Paul’s teaching were simply that all elect Jews will be saved. Finally, this view accords well with the quotations in vv. 26, 27 from Is. 59:20, 21; 27:9; Jer. 31:33, 34, which appear to speak of a comprehensive banishment of that sin that has been the cause of Israel’s alienation from God.” Also see the Geneva Study Bible (1599 Edition, notes on Romans 11:24-25): “He [Paul] speaks of the whole nation, not of any one part. . . . The blindness of the Jews is neither so universal that the Lord has no elect in that nation, neither will it be continual: for there will be a time in which they also (as the prophets have foretold) will effectually embrace that which they now so stubbornly for the most part reject and refuse.”

²⁰ “It is of no avail to appeal, as Calvin does, to Galatians 6:16. In the present passage there is the sustained contrast between Israel and the Gentiles. There is no such contrast in the context of Galatians 6:16. Although Calvin regards “all Israel” as referring to all the people of God including Jews and Gentiles, yet he does not exclude the restoration of Israel as a people to the obedience of the faith. “When the Gentiles have come in, the Jews will at the same time return from their defection to the obedience of the faith. The salvation of the Israel of God, which must be drawn from both, will thus be completed, and yet in such a way that the Jews, as the first born in the family of God, may obtain the first place” (*op. cit., ad loc.: cf.* also his comment *ad* 11:15).” Murray, pg. 96-97, fn. 51

²¹ Doekes quoted in Iain Murray’s *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2009), pg. 62-63

this is the plain teaching of the text, that God is going to one day save all of national/ethnic Israel. This doesn't mean every individual Jew will be saved, just like it doesn't mean that every individual Jew rejected the Messiah in the first century. But it does mean that as a whole, Israel will turn to the Lord Jesus Christ in saving faith.²² This is exactly what the prophets foretold. Look at **v.26** again 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"; ²⁷"and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." This is quoted from **Isaiah 59:20-21** and **Jeremiah 31:31-34**. Go read those chapters. This doctrine of the future national conversation of Israel is not limited to Paul, the prophets speak of it as well.²³ A few noteworthy prophecies would also include Isaiah 61:1-4; Jeremiah 30:7; Hosea 3:4-5; Zechariah 8 and 12:10.

Those 5 truths vindicate **our doctrine**. Before the end God will pour out His covenant mercies on Israel and they will embrace the Savior and be grafted into the Church, and this will mean life from the dead for the world

²² There are some who say that this prophecy is not talking about a great revival of Israel but rather a progressive salvation of the remnant of the Jews throughout history. Iain Murray deals with this objection on pg.63ff. John Murray deals with this on pg. 97. Kim Riddlebarger (an amillennialist) puts it most succinctly however: "If all Paul wanted to tell us here was that God was going to save the sum total of elect Jews throughout the ages, the 'the salvation of Jewish Israel will be limited forever to a remnant.' It is hard to see how this could produce the doxological comments which end Paul's discussion." Furthermore, what followed Paul's assertion in Romans 11:26 that 'all Israel will be saved' lends additional support to the idea that 'all Israel' is more than a remnant." Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case For Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: BakerBooks, 2003), pg. 193

²³ There is one compelling proof from history, namely, that the Jews are still a people down to this day. Jonathan Edwards marveled at this truth 300+ years ago: "Besides the prophecies of the calling of the Jews, we have a remarkable seal of the fulfillment of this great event in providence by a thing that is a kind of continual miracle, viz. the preserving them a distinct [nation] when in such a dispersed condition for above sixteen hundred years. The world affords nothing else like it—a remarkable hand of providence." Source: <https://www.monergism.com/noted-theologians-history-who-believed-future-conversion-nationaethnic-israel> Accessed May 7, 2022.

II. Our Duty

3 duties...

1. Informatory Use

Our **first duty** is to *think carefully* about the nation of Israel. There are two opposite errors we can make. The **first error** is the Dispensational error that sees Israel and the Gentile Church as two distinct peoples of God.²⁴ God has two distinct peoples, with two distinct plans and two distinct destinies. This is heterodox doctrine. It fails to take in the truth of **Galatians 3:28** “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”²⁵ We must reject the error that God has two different peoples. The Church is one people. When the Israel comes to salvation, they will be grafted into the one-olive tree ²⁶along with the Gentiles, and they will come in through Christ and Christ alone. The **second error** is the *God-has-nothing-more-to-do-with-the-Jews* error. If you say to me, “But Pastor Josh God took the kingdom away from the Jews in A.D. 70. Jesus told them in **Matthew 21:43** “...the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.” I agree Jesus did do that. That’s precisely what Paul is teaching in **v.17-24** of our passage, that God cut off those unbelieving branches. But what does it go on to teach? That God plans on grafting them back into the one-olive tree! Don’t cut Romans 11 out of your

²⁴ Paul Enns, a dispensationalist says this: “Dispensationalism is nowhere more distinctive than in its doctrine of the church. Dispensationalists hold that the church is *entirely distinct* from Israel as an entity...Israel always denotes the physical posterity of Jacob and is never to be confused with the church...God has a distinct program for Israel and a distinct program for the church.” Paul Enns pg. 521-522 *The Moody Handbook of Theology* Moody Press Chicago 1989

²⁵ Additionally it fails to take into account **v.17-24** in our passage. Paul is adamant that there is only one olive-tree though it is composed of both natural branches (the Jews) and wild branches (the Gentiles).

²⁶ “The olive-tree is one, though the branches are numerous, and sometimes changed.” Hodge pg. 380

Bible. Beloved God still has dealings left with Israel.²⁷ Look at v.28-29 “As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake [*Meaning as unbelieving branches they are enemies of God*]. But as regards election [*Meaning regarding the covenant that God made with Abraham and his seed*] they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” v.29 is not *merely* a general principle. Paul is applying it directly to His covenant faithfulness to the Jews. It was the Lord who called them. And His call is irrevocable. He is not a man that He will change His mind. The covenant God made with Abraham means that He will not finally reject them, but He will one day bring them back.²⁸ He has not forsaken His people whom He foreknew. He will graft them in again. Don’t over-react to Dispensationalism and think that God has no more place for the Jews. We must avoid those two errors: the “Israel, Israel, Israel” error and the “God has no place for Israel” error.

2. Admonitory Use

That brings us to our **second duty**: *rebuke*. First, if we have adopted an arrogant view towards Israel, we must rebuke ourselves. Paul specifically calls

²⁷ v.16 says “If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.” What does this prove? (see John Murray’s short summary on pg. 85) Well clearly he is referring to these branches in the following verses as the Jews who were broken off cause of their unbelief. So He is referring to the Jewish people as a whole. The dough offered as firstfruits is the same as the root. This refers to Abraham who was the beginning of the the Jewish nation. the whole lump--the Jewish nation--follows after him, just as the branches follow after the root. The idea is that since Abraham--the originator, the covenant head of the Jewish race--was holy, that is, set apart from the world, so his descendants the Jews were also holy or set apart from the world. The point is, that the reason why the Jews are still in existence today is because God is remembering His covenant with that nation. They violated it. They broke it. But God in His infinite grace still looks on them with favor, cf. Romans 11:28-29 Calvin says here: “*Let us remember that in this comparison man is not compared with man, but nation with nation. If then a comparison be made between them, they shall be found equal in this respect, that they are both equally the children of Adam; the only difference is that the Jews had been separated from the Gentiles, that they might be a peculiar people to the Lord.*” Calvin pg. 426) [Note: “*That the holiness here mentioned is external and relative, and not personal and inward, is evident from the whole context. The children of Israel were denominated holy in all their wickedness and disobedience, because they had been consecrated to God, adopted as his people, and set apart for his service, and they enjoyed all the external privileges of the covenant which God had made with their fathers.*” Calvin pg. 426, fn. 2]

²⁸ “He covenanted with the Jews to be a God to them and to their seed for ever and that they should be to him a people” Hodge, pg. 381. Deuteronomy 7:9 “Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.”

this out in v.18 “...do not be arrogant toward *the branches* [the Jews]. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root supports you.” Beloved the root supports you—meaning your salvation rests on the very covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. You as a Gentile do not support that root, it supports you. Don’t you realize that it was the Jews that preserved God’s Word in the ancient world, it was Israel that was the nursery of our Savior. Our spiritual nourishment came through them.²⁹ If you have contempt against the Jews, be rebuked. Haven’t they already received enough contempt from unbelievers? Don’t you know that God still calls them *beloved* because of the covenant He swore to them (v.28)? If God has not rejected His covenant people, God forbid that we would be arrogant or indifferent toward them!

Our second rebuke is aimed at unbelief. Dear friend, don’t you know that the Jews were cut off in the first place because of their rejection of Jesus Christ. v.20 says “They were broken off because of their unbelief.” For 2,000 years they have experienced the severity of God’s judgment. If you have not received the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, you are already under the judgment of God. You are simply waiting final sentencing. The Scripture says “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe *is condemned already*, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”³⁰ The Jews are a grave warning to you my friend. If God has been so severe with His covenant people for their unbelief, how much more will He be severe with you? Turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe and live!

3. Hortatory Use

Our **third duty** is to *pray* for the conversion of Israel. Do you know how many places in the Psalms the ancient Jews were told to pray for you, to pray for the conversion of Gentile nations for God’s Kingdom. It’s every where.

²⁹ As Charles Hodge says here, we should possess “A deep sense of...obligation to the Jews as the people through whom the true religion has been preserved, and the blessings of divine truth extended to all nations, v.17-18.” Hodge, pg. 381

³⁰ John 3:18

Ought we not to pray for that they would be grafted back in? *Because* they are beloved by God (v.28), *because* their acceptance will mean *life from the dead* for this world (v.15), we ought to pray earnestly for their conversion. This is precisely what our own Westminster Standards urge us to do. Just a sample from the Larger Catechism:

Q191. What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition (which is, *Thy kingdom come*), acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray, that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, *the Jews called*, [and] the fullness of the Gentiles brought in...

It is part of the Reformed Confessional church that we would pray for the conversion of the Jews and that great multitudes of Gentiles be brought into the Church. Those are our duties. 1) Avoid errors when thinking about Israel; 2) Rebuke yourself if you have contempt for them; and 3) Pray earnestly for their conversion, and praise God that He has promised such a thing.

III. Our Delight

1. Consolatory Use

Ask yourself: what is chiefly on display in this passage? Israel? Actually no. It's the immutable, unchangeable, faithful, tender, loyal covenant love of Jehovah. After all the wickedness the Jews committed against the Lord, what does God say about them in this chapter? v.28 "But as regards election, they are beloved..." Our covenant-keeping God has never stopped loving Israel. Loved ones, do you see what wonderful *comfort* this doctrine brings? If God doesn't discard His carnal/external national covenant with Israel, how much more will He never discard His spiritual/internal covenant of grace with you? "But Pastor

Josh I've backslidden too many times, I've been unfaithful too many times, I've sinned too many times." That's true. Your backslidings are inexcusable. Your unfaithfulness is appalling. Your sin is shameful. You and I are all those things. But God is not.

He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him"³¹

God is a covenant keeper. Take hold of that loved one. That because God has made covenant with you, He will never forget His promise, break His promise, or change His mind. Have you given Him reasons to hate you? Israel has given Him more. Have you given Him reasons to forsake you? Israel has given Him more. Have you given Him reasons to throw you in hell? Israel has given Him more. But just as He has not broken His covenant Israel, so He will never break His covenant with you.

2. Celebratory Use

As we close, I want to *celebrate* with you over God's faithfulness one more time. Do you see how this chapter ends? Paul can't help but erupt into ecstatic worship:

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

³⁴ "For who has known the mind of the Lord,
or who has been his counselor?"

³⁵ "Or who has given a gift to him
that he might be repaid?"

³¹ Psalm 103:10-11

³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.³²

Now ask yourself, what warrants this reaction from Paul? Is Paul beside himself in awe and worship because God is going to save just a small handful of Jews and Gentiles throughout history? Is that what Jesus Christ went to the cross for? Just a handful, a small number of believers? No beloved. I believe that Heaven will be far more populated than Hell. Charles Spurgeon believed the same thing. He said this:

Do you think that Christ will let the devil beat him? That he will let the devil have more in hell than there will be in heaven? No; it is impossible. For then Satan would laugh at Christ. There will be more in heaven than there are among the lost. God says, that "there will be a number that no man can number who will be saved;" but he never says, that there will be a number that no man can number that will be lost. There will be a host beyond all count who will get into heaven.³³

Consider how the Scripture talks about these places. Heaven is declared to be a vast place. It's called "the next world...a great kingdom, a country, a city."³⁴ While on the other hand hell is declared to be a small place. It's called but a "... prison, a lake (of fire and brimstone), a pit."³⁵ But what accounts for this, since it seems irrefutable that the scales of hell are much heavier in history than the scales of Heaven? Well it's true that for much of human history, that the gate has been wide that has led to destruction and those who enter by it are many.³⁶ But beloved there is coming a day when that will be reversed. A day is coming

³² v.33-36

³³ Source: <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/heaven-and-hell/#flipbook/> Accessed May 8, 2022

³⁴ Loraine Boettner, *The Millennium*, (Pennsylvania, PA.,: P & R Publishing, 1958), pg. 35

³⁵ *Ibid*

³⁶ Matthew 7:13-14

when all Israel will be saved, and the world will experience a revival it has never seen, nor heard, nor has it entered into their heart. Then we will see the fulfillment of what the prophets spoke about: "...the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."³⁷ We shall see the promises of the New Covenant come into its full fruition. **Jeremiah 31:34** "And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' *for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord*. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Beloved, Jesus Christ really will transform this world *in history*, and then the end will come.

³⁷ Isaiah 11:9