

# “ISRAEL MY GLORY”

Israel’s Mission, and Missions to Israel

by

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### AN EXPOSITION OF THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

THIS is one of the most marvellous portions of the inspired volume as unfolding the purpose of God in the Jews during this age of individual election and national rejection. For my own part it has been a prayerful study for the past thirty years and more, until nearly every word has photographed itself on my memory.

It is the chapter the Holy Spirit used in awakening an intelligent and lifelong interest in the conversion of the Jews in the heart of the late eminent Dr. Marsh. When simply Mr. Marsh, Charles Simeon requested him to supply for him at Stroud and preach on behalf of the Jews. Mr. Marsh pleaded inability to deal with this special topic. Mr. Simeon induced Mr. Marsh to accept on supplying him with his (Simeon’s) sermon. The portmanteau containing the sermon was, by mistake of the coachman, dropped short of its destination, and Mr. Marsh found himself in Stroud without the sermon. He retired to his room and read and prayed over this eleventh to the Romans. Just before service time the local secretary announced the arrival of the portmanteau, and asked, shall we get out the sermon?

“No,” replied Mr. Marsh, “neither Simeon nor Marsh will preach to-night on Jewish conversion, but Paul.”

The study of this chapter most probably contributed to Mr. Marsh’s clearness of view as to the elective character of the present dispensation, and also as to the relation of the premillennial advent of our Lord to the national interests of Israel. This chapter abounds with perhaps a greater variety of distinct doctrinal points on the Jewish question than are to be found in any other twenty chapters of the Word of God. It contains a mine of wealth, and cannot fail to enrich all who dig into its contents as for hid treasure.

This chapter carefully distinguishes between the election of the nation to special privileges and temporal blessings in Palestine, and the election of individual Jews to eternal life in Christ. It also distinguishes between the temporary fall and casting off of the nation, and the exclusion of individual Jews from the blessings of the Gospel. It even teaches the doctrine of a spiritual election of individual Jews during the very period of the national rejection.

It teaches an election within an election, and that election from the elect nation during the nation's rejection.

- It links the apostle Paul, an elect individual Jew, with Abraham, the father of the elect nation now temporarily rejected.
- It links the spiritually elect individual Jews with the inner election in the days of Elijah.
- It teaches that the national rejection has, by God's overruling providence, been made the occasion of extending the blessings of individual spiritual election to the Gentiles.
- It teaches that if a calamity to the Jewish nation has occasioned large though limited blessing to the Gentiles, how much more may we expect universal blessing to the Gentile world instrumentally caused by the nation of Israel restored and blessed.
- It teaches that the God-fearing, Bible-believing, Messiah-expecting Jew presents facilities to missionary enterprise no other people in the world present.
- It teaches the duty and privilege of converted Gentiles to seek the conversion of the Jews.
- It teaches that the gift of Palestine will never be recalled, and that the call of Abraham will never be revoked.
- It teaches the blessing of the nation of Israel on the return of the Lord.

Indeed its contents, linked to Abraham and the times of Elijah, extend over the whole period between the first and second advents of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The tenth chapter having closed with a quotation from the 65th of Isaiah, "**All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people,**" the eleventh chapter appropriately opens with the question— "**I say then, hath God cast away His people.**"

Was their national election only temporary? Or has the nation's disobedience led to a change in the Divine plan. "**God forbid**" or, by no means, it may not, or it cannot be. (μη γένοιτο) "**For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.**"

As much as to say to those who think that national rejection has at all imperiled individual salvation—Do you believe in my Jewish origin? Yes, certainly. Do you believe in the reality of my conversion? Yes, truly. Well then, Paul might say, apart from the fact that thousands of Jews were converted at Pentecost, and subsequently, the fact of my Jewish origin together with the fact of the genuineness of my conversion is proof enough that, though the nation is rejected for a time, God hath not cast off His people as to their individual, spiritual, and eternal interests, "**For I also am an Israelite.**"

"**God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew,**" neither totally nor finally—not totally as to individual salvation, not finally as to the nation. God has always had an election within an election; some loyal worshippers of God during times of general apostasy. "**Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal**" (I Kings 19:14, 18).

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

The fact that notwithstanding the general national apostasy in the days of Elijah the Lord had seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal, leads the Apostle by Divine authority to draw the inference that down to his own day, and in his own time, there continued **“a remnant according to the election of grace.”**

We may draw the same inference at any period, past or future, during this present dispensation, and say, **“Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.”** **“But if it is by grace, it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.”** If the salvation of the individual sinner be an act of grace or favor on the part of God, then works of merit are entirely excluded. Saved by grace excludes works. Saved by works would exclude grace.

**“What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day”** (Isaiah 29:10; Deuteronomy 29:4).

**“And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway”** (Psalm 49:22, 23).

Israel sought justifying righteousness in obedience to law, but obtained it not, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Paul could say even of his unconverted state, **“as touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless.”** **“But the election hath obtained it”**— hath obtained justifying righteousness.

The election here represents the individual believing Jews, willing to be saved in God’s way, by grace alone, through faith, without the deeds of law. **“Israel”** in this portion represents the nation as such, and the **“election”** represents the saved individual Jews. The saved individual Gentiles during this elective dispensation are saved on the same terms as individual Jews.

**“What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith”** (Romans 9:31-32).

God’s way of salvation for Jew and Gentile is, by grace, through faith; man’s way is any other way. Man is saved only in God’s way and surely lost in his own way. “The rest blinded,” or hardened, (**πρωρόω**) denoting a heart devoid of feeling, and a darkened understanding, or perverted judgment. The unbelieving Jews, like unbelieving Christians, are all the worse for abounding in religious privileges; for bright light blesses some and blinds others.

The hardening was the natural result of the unbelief and outward conduct of those hardened. **“In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds (thoughts) of them which believe not,”** is true alike both of Jew and Gentile. Though the above word for **“blinded”** is *“hardened”* in the Greek, there is a distinction made between blinding the eyes, and hardening the heart, as given in John 12:40, the former word being from **τοφλόω**, and the latter **πωρόω**. The blinding of Israel’s eyes and the hardening of Israel’s heart were the natural result of Israel’s willful refusal to admit the force of the evidence by which God confirmed the Divine mission of Jesus.

**“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall?”** (**ἵνα πέσωσι**) *to their destruction*).

**“God forbid”** (**μὴ γένοιτο**)—by no means, certainly not. **“but rather through their fall παραπτώματι**, marginal reading, *trespass*) **salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy”**; or, *to excite them to emulation*.

The stumbling of the Jewish nation at the doctrine of Christ crucified is not a stumbling resulting in the destruction of the nation, as the first word translated **“fall”** implies—the same Greek word being used in the following passages, **“Whose carcasses fell in the wilderness”**; **“the walls of Jericho fell down”**; **“Babylon is fallen, is fallen.”** The second word in the verse translated **“fall”** is another word altogether, whose proper meaning is trespass, and is translated in the New Testament by the words *trespasses, offences, sins, faults*.

The meaning of this verse is that, although the Jewish nation has fearfully stumbled, it is not to be destroyed, and that pending the nation’s restoration and blessing, and the fulfillment of the purpose of the nation’s election and preservation, the nation’s trespass in rejecting their Messiah is to be made the occasion of large though limited blessing to the Gentile world, and thus the Divine mission of Jesus proved to the unbelieving Jews by the transformed characters and lives of Gentiles who believe in and follow Him. The effect of Christ-like lives amongst Gentiles will be to excite the Jews to emulation when they see the reality and power of the Gospel of Christ.

Now if their fall (**παραπτώμα**) is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? Here it must be distinctly observed that the word **“fall”** is not the word representing *ruin and destruction*, but is the word used in the preceding verse to represent *trespass, offence, fault*. The truth taught seems to be this—the Jews committed a trespass in rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ, and suffered terrible loss as a consequence; but God overruled this trespass and loss to the spiritual enrichment of the Gentile world. The Gentiles have received large though limited blessing occasioned by the trespass of the Jews. The inference is that, if the Gentiles have been largely blessed through an overruled calamity to the Jews, **“how much more their fulness”**—that is, how much more may we expect the fulness of blessing to the Jewish nation to prove an instrumental blessing to the whole Gentile world.

**“Their fulness”** (**πλήρωμα αὐτῶν**) stands in contrast with **“their loss”** and represents their complete national restoration and conversion. The rejection of Jesus by the Jews, and the national rejection of the Jews in consequence, were both predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures; and when fulfilled became evidence to the Gentiles both of the Messiahship of Jesus and of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and thus helped forward Gentile conversion.

But the Old Testament Scriptures contain also predictions of national restoration and blessing.

When these latter predictions are fulfilled, the former having lost none of their force, the evidence to the truth of Holy Scripture and to the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus will simply be overwhelming.

**“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation (excite to jealousy) them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?”**

The Lord had said to Ananias at Damascus respecting Paul, **“He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel.”** And **“the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them . . . So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost.”**

Paul could thus speak to the Gentiles with commanding authority. He put honor upon his ministry as the apostle of the Gentiles, rejoicing to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, not simply and solely to get Gentiles saved, but that by winning Gentiles to Christ **“I may provoke to emulation”** my Jewish brethren and save some of them. As much as to say, “I have tried by observing the Divine order **‘to the Jew first’** to bring my Jewish brethren to Christ; but have not succeeded to the extent of **‘my heart’s desire.’** I will now see if I cannot save some Jews by preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. When the unbelieving Jews witness the changed hearts and transformed lives of converted Gentiles they may be convinced of the divinity and reality of the religion of Jesus Christ.”

Thus Paul glories in his ministry to the Gentiles as another channel for the expression of his burning love to his Jewish brethren. And why so earnestly desirous for the conversion of **‘some of them?’**

Let the answer be first given in the beautifully simple words of the Holy Spirit Himself, **“For if the casting away (the national rejection) of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead.”**

This verse asks, in what relation do Jews stand to Gentiles? How do the fortunes of the former affect the interests of the latter? And the answer seems to be this—If the temporary casting away of the Jewish nation has been used of God in bringing reconciliation to multitudes of Gentiles, how will the reception of the nation into Divine favor affect Gentile interests: it will indeed prove **“life from the dead”** to the whole Gentile world, as Charles Wesley says on this passage:—

The world shall their reception find,  
Life from the dead for all mankind.

Not only is the restoration and salvation of the nation to be a blessing to the world—this Paul knew perfectly well—but the salvation of **“some of them”** now, in this dispensation of the church, is to be a strength to Gentile believers, and a blessing to Gentile sinners, by helping to preserve from spiritual death Gentiles who are spiritually alive; and by instrumentally producing spiritual life in Gentiles dead in trespasses and sins; in short, hastening the completion of the church, and the return of her Lord.

**“And if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.”**

There is a beautiful connection between the truth taught in this verse and that taught in the verses immediately preceding. We have just gathered that the conversion of the Jews as a nation will be **“life from the dead”** to the whole Gentile world. But the nation as such is cast away, and has been cast away for nearly two thousand years, so that many Christians have given up all hope of national restoration to Palestine, and consequently all hope of national conversion; believing that so far as the Jews are to be blessed in the future they will simply drop one by one into the Christian Church as the result of the Holy Spirit’s blessing on means at present in operation.

No, says the inspired apostle, the nation, as such, is not yet done with; nor is the mission of the nation fully accomplished, although temporarily the nation is still **“cast away.”** **“If the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.”**

The **“firstfruit”** and the **“root”** represent one class of Jews, and the **“lump”** and the **“branches”** another class of Jews; but they are both, alike **“holy.”** The word קֹדֶשׁ in the Old Testament and ἅγιος in the New have a twofold meaning, *separation* and *purity*.

In the Old Testament it is used to represent not only the **“holy people”** but also the **“holy land,”** the **“holy house,”** and the **“holy vessels.”** These were all **“holy”** in the sense of having been separated, dedicated to God, irrespective altogether of the question of moral purity. Indeed the same Hebrew root is used to describe a harlot amongst the daughters, and a Sodomite amongst the sons of Israel. That is, those separated, dedicated to sin. (Deuteronomy 23:17).

The term **“holy”** as applied here to the **“firstfruit”** and the **“root,”** and also in the same sense to the **“lump”** and the **“branches”** must be understood as the separation of the Jewish people from all other people by their national election, and the dedication of that people in all time to God. The **“firstfruit”** and the **“root”** we take to represent the patriarchs of the nation, and the **“lump”** and the **“branches”** to represent the entire nation sprung from their loins; for the promises were to Abraham and to his seed. So that, though the patriarchs are dead and generations of their descendants have passed away, the people still exist as a separate people—dedicated in all time to God, preserved to be blessed and to become a blessing to the world.

**“And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.”**

The first point to be noticed in these most instructive verses is this—some branches broken off, not all. Another important point is—that the Gentile, compared to a worthless wild olive, was grafted in among—*not instead of*—them; that is, believing Gentiles were grafted among believing Jews. Another important point is—that the Gentile believer was simply to “**become a partaker**” with the Jewish believer, of the root and fatness of the olive tree.

The Gentile was not to become a *monopolizer* of spiritual blessings in Christ—only a *partaker*.

The Gentiles have not taken the place of the Jews, but have merely been admitted to a share on common terms in the blessings of a common salvation. “**Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.**” The “**root**” has the same meaning here as in the two preceding verses; the root is Abrahamic. United to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith the Gentile becomes linked to Abraham in a covenant of faith made with Abraham “**not in circumcision but in uncircumcision . . . that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised**” (Romans 4:10, 11).

The Gentile believer must not cherish a spirit of pride and boasting towards even the broken-off Jewish branches, but rather cultivate gratitude for undeserved mercies flowing through a Jewish channel.

“**Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.**” This, observe, is what the Gentile in his ignorance says; not what the apostle Paul by inspiration says.

Paul is here anticipating an error into which the Gentiles would fall. Paul does not say, “the Holy Ghost saith”; nor even, “I say I; but “*thou wilt say*”—the Gentile will say—I branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.” Paul had already admitted that “**some branches were broken off;**” so that the Gentile was right as to the *fact*, he was wrong only as to the *cause*. The broken-off branches was made the *occasion*, not the *cause* of blessing to the Gentile.

“**Well**”; (καλῶς) granted. Granted what? Granted the fact already stated, that some branches were broken off. Now the cause which the Gentile should have waited for— “**because of unbelief they were broken off.**” They were not broken off in order to make room for the Gentiles, but in consequence of their own unbelief.

There was room enough in the atoning work of Christ, room enough in the heart of Christ, for every individual Jew. The unbelief of the Jews caused the breaking off, and the breaking off of some Jewish branches occasioned blessing to the Gentiles. Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ were alike Abraham’s spiritual children, and were joint partakers of the root and fatness of the olive tree; for having embraced the religion of Christ they perpetuated the essentials of the religion of Abraham, Moses and the prophets; but those Jews who rejected Christ broke away from the religion of Abraham, Moses, and the prophets based on atoning blood, and became adherents of Rabbinism, which boasts the absence of atoning blood, “**Thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.**” The Jewish branches were broken off for unbelief; the Gentile wild olive graft stands only by faith. God’s Word never says “**fear**” without a reason.

The history of Gentile Christendom shows that the warning was not unneeded, though it has been unheeded. The unbelief and moral corruption of the Jews brought the judgments of God on “**the natural branches;**” so the unbelief and moral corruption of “**the wild olive**” will bring down the judgments of God on apostate Christendom.

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

We are here called upon to contemplate two different aspects of God’s conduct towards men—Jews and Gentiles.

Towards the Jews—severity: their temple destroyed; their cities laid in ruins; their land made desolate; themselves butchered by tens of thousands, and the remnant hunted into, and persecuted in, the four corners of the earth. *Severity*—the inevitable result of national apostasy.

**“But toward thee (the Gentile) goodness.”** Not absolutely and unconditionally, but only **“if thou continue in His goodness.”**

This epistle is the epistle to the Romans, a divine letter addressed to the Church *at* Rome, which has developed into the Church *of* Rome, and farther into Gentile Christendom. At the time when this epistle was written the Church at Rome was a model Church. Paul could say of its members, **“your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.”**

“Continue to bear such a character and to maintain this position, and the goodness of God towards, you will continue. Let there be no change in your condition and you will find no change in God’s conduct. Preserve apostolic simplicity, sound faith, fervent love, holy zeal, and the blessing of God will be continued and increased; but apostatize from sound doctrine and holy practice, as did the Jews, then assuredly **“thou also shalt be cut off.”**”

**“And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.”** This verse holds out hope on behalf of cases the least hopeful—the branches broken off for unbelief. If any might be despaired of surely these. There is hope for the unbelieving individual Jew all through this present dispensation, if he continue not in his unbelief. There is hope also finally for the nation continued in successive generations. God’s ability to bless the individual and also the nation implies His willingness and perhaps also His pledged purpose.

Let us not then any longer look on these unbelieving Jews as dry and withered olive branches along which sap nevermore can flow, but, like dry sticks, are fit only for the fire; rather let us in obedience to, and in the spirit of Christ, take hold of them kindly and gently, and bring these broken-off branches to their own olive tree; and though we cannot give them vital union, God says, I can. **“God is able to graft them in again.”** Grafted again into their own olive, **“Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.”**

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

The apostle here takes a long step beyond the mere hopefulness of cases the least hopeful; he asserts that, humanly speaking, Jews are less difficult to convert than Gentiles.

At the risk of repeating some remarks given in a former chapter on this verse, to keep up the connection with the context—preceding and following—we must offer a brief exposition here of this remarkable verse. The Gentile believer has for many hundreds of years thought it almost if not altogether impossible, to convert the Jews; and many, to their reproach, think so still.

We may say of such: **“they do err, not knowing the Scriptures.”**

The apostle here takes an illustration from nature while reversing nature’s law, and the reversal of nature’s law adds beauty and force to the illustration itself.

First notice the principle on which olives are grafted.

The good are grafted on the wild, and not the wild on the good, and the wildness of the wild olive is subdued by the goodness of the good graft. If the wild were grafted on the good, the wildness of the wild olive would subdue the goodness of the good olive, and all would run wild together. Some, aware of this, have supposed that Paul had fallen into error. But Paul was inspired; besides, he was an educated man and familiar with Palestine and olive grafting.

Mark his words. He speaks of grafting the wild on the good as **“wild (contrary) to nature;”** had he said in *harmony with nature*, then we might have suggested a mistake. The Jews here are termed **“natural branches.”** It is quite as appropriate to designate the Jews natural branches as to call the Gentiles wild olive grafts. They are both regarded as to the difference in their religious condition, the Gentiles as idolaters, the Jews as fearing God, believing the Old Testament Scriptures, and waiting for the Messiah on the authority of those Scriptures.

The Gentiles as idolaters may be considered wild in three aspects.

- They have gods many and lords many, in contradistinction from one and only one.
- They worship the many visible to the bodily eye, instead of the One invisible.
- They worship the many they themselves made instead of the One who made them.

In these three respects the Gentiles may appropriately be termed wild olives. The Jews are natural branches. How so? Jesus is the embodiment and interpretation of the Mosaic economy.

- He is God incarnate.
- He reveals the Father.
- He fulfils Jewish prophecies,
- He explains the sacrifices and priesthood of the Jewish religion.

To be a true believer in Moses is to be a true believer in Christ. Hence the Jews are natural branches. Now mark the force of the inference, if the wild olive graft of an idolatrous Gentile can be taken and grafted contrary to the laws of nature into a good Jewish olive stock, how much more shall these Jews which are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree.

It occurs to me that we may derive further instruction from this remarkable passage.

The wild olive grafted on the good, if left to itself, would subdue the good; that is, it would work *according to nature*. The wild olive graft, the Gentile, though grafted contrary to nature, is controlled by grace, and while controlled by Divine grace is contented to be a partaker, and a *partaker* only, of the root and fatness of the olive tree.

But these wild olive grafts, the Gentiles, have misunderstood their relationship to the Jewish natural branches and to the Jewish olive tree, as partakers only with believing Jews of the root and fatness.

The Gentiles have neglected the warnings in this chapter— **“be not highminded, but fear,”** **“glory not over the branches,”** **“otherwise thou also shall be cut off.”**

They have regarded the Jews as altogether cast off to an indefinite period, and themselves as having taken the place of the Jews in the Divine purpose and favor. They have called themselves spiritual Israelites, and have designated the Christian Church—composed of Jew and Gentile— *the Gentile Church*—justifying this designation by welcoming Gentiles everywhere, and by excluding Jews, under the influence of idolatry and persecution at the worst, and by neglect at best. The Gentile wild olive graft should have lost its wildness by incorporation in the Jewish Christian Church as a partaker only of its blessings; but it has claimed to be a spiritual Israel, the Gentile Church, and has thus produced a Gentile Christendom almost as corrupt as heathendom.

The Gentile wild olive graft has subdued the good olive; it has worked according to nature instead of under the controlling and subduing influence of grace.

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

The partial unbelief and consequent partial blindness of the Jews is a *revealed* mystery, the ignorance of which will produce conceit. Has there been no culpable ignorance of this mystery resulting in Gentile conceit and a sense of superiority? What is this *revealed* mystery? Simply a *partial* hardness or blindness which has befallen Israel—*partial* and *temporary*; neither *total* nor *final*.

What part of the Jewish nation is blinded or hardened? Is the blindness an arbitrary infliction of God, or has it an adequate cause? We read in the 7th verse that **“the rest were blinded** (hardened),” and in the 17th verse that **“some of the branches were broken off.”**

The partial blindness is the result of an adequate cause. The blindness is not a cause, but a consequence, a consequence of another cause, that cause—unbelief. **“Because of unbelief they were broken off.”** The unbelief has been partial and the hardening partial. If the Christian Church has not regarded the Jews as *finally* abandoned of God, she has certainly for ages regarded them as *totally* blind, and treated them accordingly; that is, she has cruelly treated them at the worst, and culpably neglected them at best, regarding the conversion of the individual Jew as almost if not altogether hopeless; inflicting a grievous wrong on the Jews themselves and incalculable injury on herself.

The four veils on the Jews, their nature, and manner of removal, are fully discussed in chapter 10, and to that chapter we direct the reader’s careful attention. This partial blindness, chronologically, is bounded by a fixed and definite period. It is to last during the period of national rejection and dispersion. It is to last during the “times of the Gentiles.” It is to last during the gathering of the Church—that is, between the first and the second advents of our blessed Lord, who, addressing the nation, said, **“Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord”** (Matthew 23:39).

It is to remain **“until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”**

**“Until”** implies continuance and cessation—continuance, during a period and cessation at its close. But what is meant by **“the fulness of the Gentiles”** which must come in before Israel’s partial blindness passes away? It cannot mean, as some take it, a filling up of Gentile iniquity. This **“fulness”** must evidently mean *blessing*.

The word **πλήρωμα** (*fulness*) must consistently be taken in the same sense as **πλήρωμα** applied to the Jews in verse 12—that is, in the sense of blessing. But it cannot mean the blessing of all Gentile nations as such, for this blessing is to come after Israel’s national conversion, and Israel’s national blessing is to be the instrumental cause in producing it. We take it then to mean simply this—**“All the individual Gentiles saved during this elective dispensation and who form the Gentile portion of the Church, the body and bride of Christ, and designated in Acts, 15th chapter, “to take out of them a people for his name”—these, with the “remnant according to the election of grace” from the Jews, complete the Church and close this dispensation. The partial blindness of Israel then passes away, and the time for the blessing of the nation arrives. “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, ‘There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob’: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”**

Here we have the guaranteed conversion of the entire nation of Israel.

**“This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more”** (Jeremiah 31:33, 34; Hebrews 8:10; 10:26).

No language can express in clearer or stronger terms the conversion of the Jewish nation.

**“Israel shall be saved by the Lord with an everlasting-salvation.” “In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory” (Isaiah 65:17, 25).**

But the special circumstance under which the nation’s conversion is to take place is by the personal and premillennial advent of our blessed Lord, **“As it is written.”** We are now referred to Isaiah, 59th and 60th chapters. **“The Redeemer shall come to Zion.” “The Deliverer shall come out of Zion.”** He shall come to Zion, and shall display His power and glory out of Zion, in turning away ungodliness from Jacob, and in His personal superintendence of the world’s blessing through restored and saved Israel. **“As for Me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.”**

This is final restoration and blessing. Now restored and blessed Israel is addressed—not the Church—but the national Israel— **“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee . . . And nations (Gentiles) shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”**

**“As touching the Gospel, they are enemies for your sake; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sake.”**

The Jews, as a nation, are enemies of the Gospel of Christ, and, as a nation, are **“cast away”** during this dispensation. As their national rejection of Christ and their own national rejection were both predicted, both these events become evidence of the truth of the Scriptures and of the Messiahship of Jesus; and thus Jewish unbelief becomes mysteriously a ground for Gentile faith.

Gentile believers reap benefit from Jewish unbelief. Here the election (**τὴν ἐκλογὴν**), on account of which the Jews are still beloved for their fathers’ sake, is the *national* election. The word “election” has two distinct applications in this chapter; one refers to individual Jews elect to eternal life in Christ Jesus, and are called **“a remnant according to the election of grace”**; the other refers to the elect nation.

The latter sense is the meaning in this verse. God has entered in covenant relationship with the patriarchs and with their seed, and in view of the purpose of their national election they are still beloved of God. The national election was typical of individual and spiritual election in Christ Jesus. The interests of the national are bounded by time; but the interests of the spiritual extend throughout eternity.

The Jewish nation cannot be destroyed, but must be preserved till the purposes of election are fully accomplished; neither can the elect in Christ Jesus be destroyed, for Jesus has said, **“All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me” (John 6:37); and “they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand” (Ch. 10:28).**

The unbelief of the Jewish nation, like the national “**casting away**,” and the national “**trespass**” referred to in verses 11, 12 and 15, having been overruled for large though limited blessing to the Gentiles, the faith of the Jewish nation will prove a direct and instrumental blessing on an universal scale.

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

God has not repented, has not changed His mind, respecting the gift of Palestine, or the call of Abraham and his seed to be a blessing to the world.

**“For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.”**

Notice the little word “**now**” occurring three times in these two verses. We take this word here as covering the present dispensation. All through this dispensation the *partial disobedience* of the Jews is made the occasion of the *partial conversion* of the Gentiles.

Further, all through this dispensation the partial conversion of the Gentiles is to be the instrumental cause of blessing to the Jewish “**remnant according to the election of grace**”; that is, through the mercy shown to Gentiles the Jews are now to obtain God’s mercy in Christ Jesus.

Gentile Christians, please observe, it is not *through your cruelty*; it is not *through your neglect*; but “**through your mercy**,” or, literally “*the mercy shown to you*”—through your compassion in exercise, your love at work— “they also may now obtain mercy.” Gentile Christian, will you faithfully examine your own conduct in the presence of God with this passage of His own word before you? If you do so, and adjust your conduct to its teaching, you will assuredly be blessed in your obedience.

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

The Gentiles lost the knowledge of God and became disobedient. Their disobedience became the occasion of Jewish national election. The Jewish nation became disobedient.

The partial disobedience of the Jews became the occasion of partial blessing to the Gentiles. The obedience of saved Gentiles becomes the instrumental cause of salvation to the elect remnant of Jews. Gentile Christendom becomes disobedient and apostate.

The disobedience of Gentile Christendom becomes the occasion of the conversion of the Jewish nation, and the Jewish nation becomes the instrumental cause of the blessing of the world. God shuts up all—Jews and Gentiles—unto disobedience that He “**may have mercy upon all**.”

**“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and His ways past tracing out!”**

Here the apostle, with his powerful, well trained, and well stored mind, aided by the inspiration of God, seeks to fathom the depth of the riches of Divine wisdom and knowledge as manifested in the plan of human redemption and unfolded in the history of the Jews. The apostle does not carp and cavil at that which he cannot comprehend; he does not question the wisdom of God's arrangements; but he finds his own wisdom unequal to the task of judging God's determinations, and his own knowledge insufficient to trace out God's ways.

In the plan of Divine dispensations there are infinite depths, not only of wisdom and knowledge, but also of the riches of wisdom and knowledge. In deep consciousness of our very limited capacity to understand even all God has in mercy revealed, let us cultivate a spirit of devout and humble gratitude for all we are permitted to know, and firmly trust His wisdom where we cannot discover the meaning of His words, and rely upon His knowledge where we cannot trace His ways.

Here **“we know in part.”** We will not be so foolish as to refuse Jesus and salvation through Him because He is God's unspeakable gift. Neither will we refuse the riches of His grace here, or the riches of His glory hereafter because those riches are **“the unsearchable riches of Christ.”**

We know enough to adore, to praise and to trust. Job had an exceptional experience, but even he confessed, **“Lo, these are but the outskirts of His ways: And how small a whisper do we hear of Him! But the thunder of his power (mighty deeds) who can understand.”** (Job 26:14)

**“For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again.”** What man on earth or what angel in heaven has ever understood all the reasons of God's conduct towards men in redemption and in providence. To whom has God been indebted for counsel and advice in the formation or execution of his plans? If anyone can show that God is under any obligation to him for counsel he shall have a full recompense. God is indebted to no one. He knows the end from the beginning. He says, **“I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure”** (Isaiah 66:9, 10).

**“For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things.”** Of Him as the source of all things created. Through or by Him all things are upheld and governed. And unto Him the universe owes adoration, praise, trust, love, and service. **“To whom be the glory for ever. Amen.”** To Him, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, be the glory unto the ages. (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας) Amen. **“Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord”** (Psalm 150: 6).

~ end of chapter 22 ~

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