

### Israel Saved

#### Romans 11:25—27

Paul has been talking specifically to the Gentiles beginning with verse 13. Before this, beginning with chapter 9, Paul was explaining to the Jews how God is now dealing differently with the nation of Israel than He was since her inception. God had once called them “My people,” but now that He has set them aside, they are “not My people.” Israel is no longer in her special place of service. The nation that was once in a place of honor has now been removed. God is no longer using the nation of Israel to reveal Himself to the world. This is illustrated by having branches cut off of the olive tree in Romans 11:17.

The olive tree has nothing to do with salvation, but it is demonstrating the group through whom God is working. Once the unbelieving branches were removed from the olive tree, branches of a wild olive tree were grafted on, representing the Gentiles. God is now working through the Gentiles to accomplish His plans. Just as the Little Flock of believing Israelites were called out of the nation of Israel, the Church, the Body of Christ, is being called out of the Gentiles. This does not limit who can get saved. When God was working with Israel, any Gentile could come to God through the nation of Israel. Now that God is working through the Gentiles, any Israelite can come to God, not through the nation of Israel, but by the doctrine taught by Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

Things will not remain in this condition forever, for the Gentiles will be broken off of the olive tree and the nation of Israel, the natural olive tree branch, will once again be grafted back onto the tree. This will happen after the Rapture. Israel’s program will pick up where it left off, just prior to the beginning of the seven-year Tribulation. We know this because Jesus was standing in Acts 7:56, an indication of the impending judgement of the Tribulation (Psalm 110:1; 68:1—2; Isaiah 3:13).

Today, Israel stands in partial blindness or hardness of heart. This is related to God withdrawing their position of honor. The nation was once close to God, but God withdrew this special position, leaving Israel at a distance from Him. Blindness was the natural result of Israel being removed from this special relationship with God.

#### **All Israel saved** (verse 26)

The above overview of God’s plan fits in with Paul’s declaration that all of Israel will be saved. Chronologically, this is related to the wild olive branches being removed from the olive tree and the natural olive branches being grafted back onto the tree. Israel’s salvation looks forward to the Second Coming when Jesus Christ returns, takes charge of the world, sets up His Kingdom on earth and places Israel into a position of honor to rule over the Gentiles.

There is much misunderstanding about how all of Israel will be saved. Some believe that every Israelite will eventually be saved. This is not what Paul is stating because just a couple chapters back he defines true Israel as those who are believers (Romans 9:8). Unbelieving Israel will be cut off of the nation of Israel at the end of the Tribulation leaving only the righteous Israelites (Zechariah 13:8—9). Others try to put the church in this verse in an attempt to reconcile their misinterpretation of other verses related to Israel. Those who do this are usually advocates of some type of replacement theology. Those who do this do not understand that the natural and wild olive branches remain as natural and wild. The wild branches never become the natural branches.

Salvation in Israel is pictured as happening in the future. They were looking forward to a physical salvation from their enemies (2 Chronicles 20:17; Psalm 110; Luke 1:70—71) and were also looking ahead to eternal life (Luke 1:67—69, 77). We must again separate the individual Israelite from the nation of Israel

when looking at their salvation. Paul is specifically addressing the nation of Israel when he says that all Israel will be saved. The following verses support what Paul says in Romans 11:26:

**Ezekiel 36:24—25, 33** 24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. 25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you...33 Thus saith the Lord God; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause *you* to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded.

**Jeremiah 31:34** And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, 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 I will remember their sin no more.

God will forgive the nation of Israel at the Second Coming. Christ will forgive their sins, cleanse them, bring them into the Millennial Kingdom and they will be permanently united with Christ at the marriage supper of the Lamb. This is in fulfillment of the New Covenant. God is actively taking control of Israel to bring her into the Promised Land and make her ready to be with him for all eternity. It's interesting to see how often the phrase "I will" is used in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, books that show how God will be active in Israel's future. All of (existing) Israel will be saved at the end of the Tribulation because God makes it so.

Individual Israelites were saved by believing God and by doing what He commanded. For instance, King David was a saved Israelite, and although he sinned, he was cleansed by obeying God when he humbled himself, asking for forgiveness. I believe that Israelites had no assurance of their salvation, but they were nonetheless eternally secure, the same as the Old Testament saints who lived before Israel was a nation.

Noah was said to be perfect and just (righteous), even though he certainly sinned (Genesis 6:9; 7:1). He was called this by the Lord because he faithfully obeyed God. When he sinned, he came back to God in the prescribed manner. He was called blameless by God, but he was not faultless.

The same can be said about King David. In spite of committing some major sins, David was said to be a man after God's own heart (1 Kings 15:3; Acts 13:22). When confronted with his sin, he humbled himself before God. God desires for men to fear the Lord, to walk in His ways, to love Him, and to serve the Lord with all their heart and soul (Deuteronomy 10:12). This is what David did (Psalm 18:20—24). Those who walk in the Law were considered undefiled and blameless because even when they sinned, they used the remedies of the Law to come back to God (Psalm 119:1).

Other people said to be perfect and blameless were Job (Job 1:1,8; 2:3), King Asa (2 Chronicles 15:17), the priest Zacharias and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5—6). According to Luke 1:6, they were walking in the commandments and requirements of the Law. They were not perfectly sinless, but were faithful in using the Law to remedy any sin they may have committed. Their sacrifices were done in humbleness of heart (Micah 6:5—8). These people came to God out of faith. Those who tried to be righteous by obeying the Law without faith were not truly saved. Paul gives himself as an example of being blameless in following the Law, yet he was far from God (Philippians 3:6).

Paul quotes Isaiah 59:20 to show how the Deliverer (Redeemer) will come and rescue Israel when their enemy comes upon them like a flood. Zechariah 12:10—11 picks up from this point by showing how the Spirit will be poured out on Israel so that they will know who Jesus Christ is, and they will mourn and weep bitterly over the rejection of the Messiah. Zechariah 13 continues by showing how God will clean out the unfaithful part of Israel until they are a refined people, ready to enter the Kingdom. Those who remain will constitute true, believing Israel (Romans 9:8), thus all Israel will be saved.

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