

Paul's Epistle to the Romans

LESSON **XXI** : THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL, PART ONE — CHAP 11:1-15

“A single basic theme can be traced throughout 11:1-32, stated at the beginning and at the end of the section: ‘God has not rejected his people, whom he foreknew’ (v. 2a); ‘from the standpoint of election they [Israelites] are beloved because of the patriarchs.’ At the same time, Paul provides clear evidence that an important transition in his argument takes place at 11:11, and I prefer therefore to view 11:1-10 and 11:11-32 as separate literary units [note it is usual to consider 11:1-32 an entire literary unit]. Each of these units is introduced the same way: ‘Therefore, I say,’ followed by a question expecting a negative answer, which is reinforced with the emphatic response ‘by no means.’ Each also displays the ending typical of the other major literary units in chaps. 9-11: a mixed quotation, or series of quotations, from the OT (cf. 9:25-29; 10:19-21; 11:26b-27).

As he does so often in Romans, Paul uses a rhetorical question to introduce this next state of his argument: ‘I say, therefore: God has not rejected his people, has he?’ Paul raises the question because of what he has just said about Israel in 10:21: they are a ‘disobedient and contrary people.’ But this accusation summarizes Paul’s main point in the whole section 9:30-10:21. At the same time, Paul’s answer to his initial rhetorical question picks up important themes from 9:6-29 also. As he did there, Paul here divides Israel into two groups: a ‘remnant,’ enjoying the blessings of salvation and existing by virtue of God’s gracious election (vv. 5-6; cf. 9:6b-13; 15-16, 18a, 22-23, 27-29), and ‘the rest,’ hardened by God in spiritual obduracy (vv. 7b-10; cf. 9:13b, 16-17, 18b, 22-23). In this section, therefore, and especially in vv. 7-10, Paul gathers together the threads of his teaching about Israel to this point. Despite the refusal of most Jews to recognize in Christ the culmination of salvation history (9:2-3; 9:30-10:21) — a refusal that mirrors God’s own act of hardening — God continues, in faithfulness to his word (9:4-5, 6a), to treat Israel as a whole as his people, manifesting his continuing concern for them in the preservation of a remnant of true believers. At the same time, 11:1-10 lays the foundations for what Paul will teach about Israel’s future in 11:11-32. For the concept of the remnant, used negatively in 9:27-29 — only a remnant will be saved — serves a positive purpose in the movement from 11:1-10 to 11:11-32 — there is a remnant, a pledge of God’s continuing faithfulness to Israel and the promises he has made to her. 11:1-10, therefore, functions as a transition between Paul’s discussion of Israel’s past and present (9:6-10:21) and her future (11:11-32).

“The paragraph unfolds in three sections. The rhetorical question and Paul’s answer to it (vv. 1-2a) introduce its main thesis: God has not rejected his people. Paul defends this thesis in vv. 2b-6 with his remnant teaching. Verses 7-10 respond to the implications of this situation with a reprisal of Paul’s understanding of Israel’s present situation, with particular emphasis on the hardening of many Jews.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 671f]

*“The theme of the whole section is categorically stated in v. 2a: ‘God has not cast off his people whom he foreknew.’ That even at the present time the disobedience of Israel is not complete (there exists ‘a remnant according to the election of grace’, Jews who are believers in Christ) is the burden of the first subsection (vv. 1-10), while the second (vv. 11-24) contributes the assurance that the exclusion of the majority of Jews is not going to last for ever. The third subsection (vv. 25-32) gives an insight into the mystery of the divine plan of mercy concerning both Jews and Gentiles, and finally vv. 33-36 conclude both this section and the whole of main division with expression of adoring wonder and praise.” [Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, pg 542]*

*“For centuries people have been puzzled by the nation of Israel. The Roman government recognized the Jewish religion, but it still called the nation secta nefaria — ‘a nefarious sect.’ The great historian Arnold Toynbee classified Israel as ‘a fossil civilization’ and did not know what to do with it. For some reason, the nation did not fit into his historical theories. Paul devoted all of Romans 11 to presenting proof that God is not through with Israel. We must not apply this chapter to the church today, because Paul is discussing a literal future for a literal nation.” [Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol 1 pg 550]*

Summary: Israel, The “Elect” and the Hardened” (11:1-10)

I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel saying, 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. Even so

I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don’t you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah — how he appealed to God against Israel: “Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me”? And what was God’s answer to him? “I have reserved for myself seven thousand

I say, then, Did God cast away His people? let it not be! for I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin: God did not cast away His people whom He knew before; have ye not known — in Elijah — what the Writing saith? how he doth plead with God concerning Israel, saying, ‘Lord, Thy prophets they did kill, and Thy altars they dug down, and I was left alone, and they seek my life;’ but what saith the divine answer to him? ‘I left to Myself seven thousand men, who did not bow a knee to Baal.’ So then also in the present

then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. 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. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them: let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back *always*. (Rom 11:1-10 KJV)

who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, as it is written: “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day.” And David says: “May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.” (Rom 11:1-10 NIV)

time a remnant according to the choice of grace there hath been; and if by grace, no more of works, otherwise the grace becometh no more grace; and if of works, it is no more grace, otherwise the work is no more work. What then? What Israel doth seek after, this it did not obtain, and the chosen did obtain, and the rest were hardened, according as it hath been written, ‘God gave to them a spirit of deep sleep, eyes not to see, and ears not to hear,’ — unto this very day, and David saith, ‘Let their table become for a snare, and for a trap, and for a stumbling-block, and for a recompense to them; let their eyes be darkened — not to behold, and their back do Thou always bow down.’ (Rom 11:1-10 Young’s Literal Translation)

“In support of his emphatic denial of the possibility that God has cast off His people Israel Paul cites the fact of his own Jewishness (God could hardly have chosen a Jew to be His special apostle to the Gentiles, had He cast off His people, the Jews). No, God has certainly not broken His promise not to cast them off, which the OT attests. In vv. 2b-4 he goes on to appeal to the story of Elijah, and to the mysterious ‘seven thousand men’ of God’s reply to him. These seven thousand, of whom the prophet was unaware, were (according to the application in v. 5f) ‘a remnant according to the election of grace’, and now at the time the apostle is writing the minority of Jews who do believe in Christ is also such a remnant. ***And the very fact that it is a remnant according to the election of grace, and therefore not a remnant standing by its own deserving, makes its existence full of promise for the rest of the nation, a pledge of God’s continuing interest in those [‘rest’] who have indeed been hardened by a divine hardening such as spoken of in scripture.***” [Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, pg 543]

V 1 — PAUL CLARIFIES AND DENIES A POSSIBLE IMPLICATION FROM HIS PREVIOUS COMMENTS —

“The verb ‘I say’ in the rhetorical introduction to this section forges a link with 10:14-21, where Paul twice uses the same verb to signal transitions in his argument (vv. 18 and 19). At the same time, the ‘therefore’ shows that Paul now draws an implication from what he has said there. Or, to be more accurate, ***Paul denies an implication that his readers might have drawn from the previous section.*** He does so by using a rhetorical pattern very typical of Romans: a question expecting a negative answer — ‘God has not rejected his people, has he?’ — followed by the strong negative response ‘By no means!’ The question is certainly a natural one. Israel’s refusal to acknowledge Jesus Christ, the culmination of salvation history (10:4) and sole mediator of God’s righteousness (10:5-13), would seem to mean that she could no longer claim to be ‘God’s people.’ But, as in 3:1, where Paul raises a similar question, Paul refuses to admit the ‘logical’ conclusion. ***Despite her disobedience, Israel remains ‘the people of God’ — in what sense, Paul will explain in the rest of the chapter.***” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 672f]

“The fact that it has just been confirmed that Israel did hear and did know, and is therefore without any excuse, raises the question whether the conclusion to be drawn from Israel’s stubborn disobedience is that God has cast away His people, excluded them from His plan of salvation. But the terms in which the question is expressed presuppose the negative answer it must receive, for they are clearly reminiscent of OT passages which declare categorically that God will not cast off His people: 1 Sam 12.22; Ps 94.14. ***The question is thus tantamount to asking, ‘Has God broken His explicit promise not to cast off His people?’ So we may say that the first ground of the [‘let it not be’] which follows is the one which, though unexpressed, is implicit in the language used, namely, that Holy Scripture testifies that God will not cast off His people.***” [Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, pg 543f]

PAUL IS LIVING PROOF GOD HAS NOT FORSAKEN ISRAEL — “As he did also at the beginning of his discussion of Israel (‘my kindred according to the flesh,’ 9:3), Paul now again reminds his readers of his identification with Israel: ‘even I am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.’ Paul may refer to his Jewish identity to explain his *motivation* in rejecting the notion that God might have rejected Israel so vehemently: as a Jew who still identified with his people, he could hardly countenance God’s abandonment of Israel. However, the ‘for’ introducing the sentence is more likely to introduce a *reason* for Paul’s denial.... [P]aul intends here to associate himself with this entity. Paul himself, as a Jewish Christian, is living evidence that God has not abandoned his people Israel. Jews, like Paul, are continuing to be saved and to experience the blessings God promised to his people.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 673f] “Paul shows that he is as firmly located within Judaism as anyone can be; he is not first- or even tenth-generation proselyte.” [Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, pg 635]

THE ISSUE IS NOT JUST THAT PAUL WAS ONE JEW THAT WAS SAVED — “[W]hat Paul has in mind is not just the fact that he, a Jew, is a Christian, nor yet that he who has been so fierce an opponent of the gospel is a Christian, but the fact that he, a Jew (and one who has particularly ferociously opposed the gospel), is God’s chosen apostle to the Gentiles. Were

God intending only to save a mere handful of Israel, had He really cast off the people of Israel as a whole, would He have chosen an Israelite to be the apostle to the Gentiles and the chief bearer of the gospel message? In his person the missionary vocation of Israel is at last being fulfilled and Israel is actively associated with the work of the risen Christ. This is a more cogent evidence of God's not having cast off His people than is the simple fact that one particular Jew has come to believe." [Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, pg 544]

V 2 — GOD CHOSE ISRAEL AND THEREFORE WILL NOT REJECT THEM — “Paul asserts positively what he denied in v. 1a: ‘God has not rejected his people.’ The wording reflects Ps. 94:14 (*‘For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance’*) and 1 Sam. 12:22 (*‘For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name’s sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people’*). The relative clause Paul adds to this assertion — ‘whom he foreknew’ — does not simply define ‘his people’ but adds a reason for the assertion. For the ‘know’ in the verb ‘foreknow’ refers to God’s election: as Amos puts it, *‘You [people of Israel] only have I known of all the families of the earth’* (3:2a). The temporal prefix, ‘fore-’, indicates further that *God’s choosing of Israel took place before any action or status on the part of Israel that might have qualified her for God’s choice. How could God reject a people whom he in a gracious act of choice had made his own? As Paul has made clear earlier in the letter (3:3-4), human sinfulness and disobedience cannot cancel his pledged word.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 674]

CORPORATE ISRAEL IS THE RECIPIENT OF GOD’S ELECTION — “Who are the recipients of this gracious choice of God’s? *If the clause ‘whom he foreknew’ is restrictive, Paul would be asserting only that God had not rejected a certain body of elect persons from within Israel* (so Calvin, Hodge, Haldane). This view has the benefit of bringing strict consistency into Paul’s use of the verb ‘foreknew’: in both this verse and in 8:29, it would refer to God’s choosing individuals for salvation. And Paul certainly argues for an election to salvation of individuals within the larger body of national Israel (9:6-29). *But the context demands that Paul here be speaking of God’s election of the people as a whole* (so most commentators according to Moo; see also Murray, Cranfield). *For it is this national entity whose status is called into question by what Paul has said in 9:30-10:21 and about whom Paul then asks in v. 1. Furthermore, v. 28, which appears to reassert the point Paul makes here in v. 2, ascribes election to Israel as a nation also. Paul, then, uses the verb ‘foreknew’ to indicate God’s election, the purpose of that election being determined by the context. In 8:29, where all those ‘foreknown’ are also justified and glorified, the election is clearly salvation. In this verse, however, Paul reflects the common OT and Jewish corporate sense of election, according to which God’s choosing of the nation Israel guarantees blessings and benefits (as well as responsibility; note the continuation of Amos 3:2, cited above) to the people as a whole but does not guarantee salvation for every single Israelite.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 674f]

“Calvin understood [whom he foreknew] as having a restricted sense, limiting the reference of [his people] to those members of the people of Israel who are the objects of God’s secret election. But, in spite of the fact that vv. 4-7 do go on to differentiate between an elect remnant and the rest of the people, this interpretation is most unlikely; for it is hardly to be disputed that in v. 1 [his people] refers to Israel as a whole, and it is unnatural to give it a different sense in v. 2. We take it then that the relative clause refers to the general election of the people as a whole, and indicates a further ground for denying that God has cast off His people. The fact that God foreknew them (i.e., deliberately joined them to Himself in faithful love) excludes the possibility of His casting them off.” [Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, pg 545]

“[W]hom he foreknew — that is, the whole people, not just part. The language is firmly rooted in the Jewish concept of Israel’s election. Paul shares the confidence of other Jews that nothing could alter the basic fact of God’s choosing Israel to be his own.... Paul adds ‘whom he foreknew.’ God knew the character of his people before he chose them as his people, and that means also foreknew their frequent unfaithfulness to God, including now their large-scale rejection of God’s commitment to them. Had it been the case that their unfaithfulness was going to make any difference to God’s faithfulness, he would never have chosen them in the first place. Paul’s confidence is two-fold: that Israel is not acting in any way unforeseen by God; and that consequently God remains faithful to Israel notwithstanding Israel’s failure. Just as the choice of Jacob and the rejection of Esau was without regard to their future conduct (9:10-13), so Israel’s status as God’s people remains unaffected by Israel’s latest and most serious failure.” [Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, pg 636, 645]

“Israel is the only nation God has foreknown and predetermined to be His people and the recipients of His love and grace. ‘For you are a holy people to the Lord your God,’ Moses declared to Israel. ‘The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers’ (Deut. 7:6-8). Because God foreknew and predetermined before the foundation of the earth to set His special love upon Israel forever, He can never totally reject them. To do so would invalidate His divine promises, nullify His divine faithfulness, discredit His divine integrity, and compromise His divine love. One of the greatest evidences that God has not totally rejected Israel is the continual remnant of that people whom God has graciously preserved for Himself. From the day God called Abraham until the day Christ returns in glory and judgment, there has not been and will never be a time when the earth will be without believing Jews.” [MacArthur, *Romans 9-16*, pg 99f]

IS IT POSSIBLE “ISRAEL” IN v. 2a REFERS TO SPIRITUAL SALVATION? — One of the major difficulties associated with this chapter is the identity of Israel and how it effects end-times theology (eschatology). In an attempt to be as fair as

possible, I try to read material outside of my accepted beliefs and present those difficulties whenever possible (and as time allows; those who teach understand that there is never enough time to prepare as one would wish). ***I personally see a corporate election of Israel as a nation for specific blessings not given to the Gentiles, all of which are wonderful but none of which secure eternal spiritual salvation. I also see a personal, individual election of people, Jew and Gentile, who make up the number of God's elect and does involve eternal spiritual salvation. Therefore, while in one sense of the word we may be "spiritual Jews" (Rom. 2:28, 29; 9:6) this does not in any way diminish nor replace the promises given to national Israel.***

One who would differ with myself on some of these details is William Hendriksen. He is one of the finest expositors I have ever read and when I was teaching Sunday School on the life of Christ, his commentaries were the first to be used in my studies (I used Hendriksen on the gospels for the backbone of my material, much as I'm using Moo in my Romans study). But I cannot follow his exposition of this chapter. Verses 1-2 is an example of where I would disagree with Brother Hendriksen. His comments:

"1a. 'I ask then, "Did God reject his people?"' Were not the Jews God's 'peculiar treasure,' his very own? See Exod. 4:22; 19:6; Deut. 14:2; 26:18; Ps. 135:4; Isa. 43:20; Hos. 11:1. Nevertheless, in complete harmony with previous statements (2:17-25; 9:30-32; 10:3, 16) Paul has just now stated that the Jews are disobedient and obstinate (10:21), a people deserving to be condemned. Does the apostle mean, then, that God has totally rejected, has thrust away from himself, *his people*?

Paul wants the addressees to become concerned about this question. He, accordingly, to arouse their interests, asks them to answer it. He says, 'I ask then, Did God reject his people?'

Paul now answers his own question: 1b, 2a. 'Of course not! Why, I myself am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people whom he foreknew.'

Note the terse, almost indignant, negative answer, 'Of course not!' Or 'Perish the thought!' See on 3:5. Does not 1 Sam. 12:22 state, 'For the sake of his great name the Lord will not reject his people,' and is not this assurance repeated in Ps. 94:14, which adds, 'He will never forsake his inheritance'?

The words, 'Why, I myself am an Israelite ... of the tribe of Benjamin,' remind us of a similar statement in Phil. 3:5. Paul was a direct descendant not only of Abraham but of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; in fact, of Jacob's son Benjamin! That son was the youngest child of Jacob's most beloved wife, Rachel. Benjamin was the only son of Jacob born in the land of promise.

Being able to claim such ancestry, the apostle was therefore 'a Hebrew of Hebrews,' a Hebrew if there ever was one, unquestionably *an Israelite*.

Moreover, even though this was true, Paul had been a fierce persecutor of God's dear children. Nevertheless, the former enemy had become a friend, a true believer and even an enthusiastic apostle and proclaimer of the gospel. All this because of divine sovereign love rested upon him, and this not only during his lifetime but from all eternity.

Indeed, God did not reject his people, including Paul, *whom he foreknew*; that is, on whom, from before the foundation of the world, he had set his love. He had made them the object of his special delight, a delight beginning in eternity, continuing in connection with their conception and birth, and never leaving them. For more on divine foreknowledge see on 8:29. Also see John 8:27, 28.

So here in verses 1b, 2a Paul is, as it were, saying, 'Does anyone need proof that God fulfils his promise and has not rejected Israel? Well, then, look at me. God did not reject me, and I am an Israelite!'" [Hendriksen, *Romans*, pg 360f; *all italic emphasis his. Forgive the lengthy quote but I did not want to be accused of quoting bits and pieces in order to misinterpret his meaning for my own ends.*]

Much of what he says is excellent (as always with Hendriksen) and much of which we would agree. But re-read his comments, taking particular notice of what he does between these two verses. Verses 1 and 2 read as follows:

"I say, therefore: God has not rejected his people, has he? By no means! For even I am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people, whom he foreknew." (Rom 11:1,2a)

Twice Paul uses the phrase, "rejected his people." I believe the thrust of what Paul is saying is this:

"I say, therefore: God has not rejected [the Jews, his people, chosen as a corporate nation to receive special temporal blessings] has he? By no means! For even I am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected [the Jews, his people, chosen as a corporate nation to receive special temporal blessings,] whom he foreknew." (Rom 11:1,2a)

Paul's intent is that God has not rejected his people, the corporate nation of Israel, chosen to receive temporal blessings never given to the Gentiles. Granted, those promises and blessings did not include eternal spiritual salvation for each and every person just because he was a Jew. But as proof that God was still involved with the Jews as a nation in a temporal fashion, God was still saving people from among that number. Paul was such a person, one of the remnant (as Paul goes on to explain in this chapter).

Prior to noting the change of emphasis placed upon the verses by Hendriksen, let's make some observations concerning the verses to clarify Hendriksen's shift in meaning. Verse 1 speaks of Israel corporately and nationally. This is obvious and is not denied by Hendriksen (see his comments above). Continuing, we see in v. 2a Paul states God did not forsake his people *whom he foreknew*. Whatever explanation we give to "*whom he foreknew*" directly affects "*his people*" in v. 2a. Hendriksen gives a purely spiritual, eternal salvation explanation of "*whom he foreknew*," therefore "*his people*" in v. 2a cannot refer to all Israel nationally but only to those who receive eternal salvation. Hendriksen's interpretation might be stated as follows:

"I say, therefore: God has not rejected [the Jews, his people, chosen as a corporate nation to receive special temporal blessings] has he? By no means! For even I am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected [his people, the elect chosen to eternal salvation,] whom he foreknew." (Rom 11:1,2a)

By making the change of emphasis Hendriksen does, he is saying God has not nor ever will forsake those whom he has chosen to receive eternal spiritual salvation, "*his people*" in verse 2a. But Hendriksen does this by placing a different meaning upon "*his people*" in v. 2a than the same term in v. 1b. **By changing this emphasis, Hendriksen avoids God's promise to not forsake the nation as a nation.**

Can Hendriksen provide other verses to support his interpretation of v. 2a? Of course he can, but not without separating these two verses from each other. Would anyone reading these verses together without any outside influence ever imagine Paul is changing the meaning of the phrases "*rejected his people*" between these two verses? Is there anything within the verses themselves to incline us to believe the phrase means one thing in v. 1b but another in v. 2a? I believe Hendriksen gives the interpretation he does because of the influence of his eschatological beliefs, and I believe that interpretation to be inconsistent with the flow of the passage as a whole.

PAUL SUPPORTS HIS PREMISE FROM SCRIPTURE — "Paul has already hinted at his reason for denying the notion that God has rejected his people Israel: in his own person, an Israelite who is saved by faith in Christ, he gives evidence of God's continuing concern for Israel (v. 1a). Paul now makes explicit this line of reasoning and broadens it by reference to the concept of a remnant. He first provides biblical support for the concept. 'Or do you know' implies that Paul thinks his readers will be familiar with 'the Scripture' and its implications that he is about to cite. Paul identifies the passage with a formula similar to ones found in Jewish literature: 'in the section about Elijah.' He further specifies the text as the one in which 'Elijah appeals to God against Israel.'" [Moo, *Romans*, pg 675]

APPEALS — means 'petition, intercede,' usually a positive plea on behalf of someone, as in Rom 8:27 of the Spirit's intercession 'on behalf of' the saints; and 8:34 of Christ's intercession 'on behalf of' Christians. Here, however, the petition of Elijah is not 'on behalf of' Israel, but 'against' them. Elijah was pleading with God against Israel, speaking to God in accusation of Israel.

v 3, 4 — PAUL'S QUOTE CONCERNING ELIJAH, GOD AND THE REMNANT — "The passage to which Paul refers is the story of King Ahab's attack on the prophets of Yahweh (1 Kings 19:1-18). After learning of Ahab's slaughter of the prophets, Jezebel threatens her nemesis Elijah with the same fate (vv. 1-2). Elijah then flees to the wilderness, where he bemoans his fate (vv. 3-14) and where the Lord comforts him with the assurance that he is working out his plan for Israel and the surrounding nations (vv. 15-18). From this passage, Paul quotes Elijah's lament about being left alone after the slaughter of the prophets (v. 3 — 1 Kings 19:10 and 14) and the Lord's concluding reassurance to Elijah: 'I have left for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal' (v. 4 — 1 Kings 19:18b). Paul tailors the texts to suit his purpose without, however, changing their meaning. He also supplies a suitable introduction to each citation, adding the vocative [direct address] 'Lord' in v. 3 to make clear to whom Elijah's words are addressed and using the rhetorical question 'But what does the divine answer say to him?' in v. 4 to announce the Lord's reply to Elijah.

"The 1 Kings passage, which is one of the seminal 'remnant' texts in the OT, suits Paul's purposes admirably, with its contrast between the apparent hopeless state of Israel and God's assurance of his continuing care for the people through his preservation of a remnant of true believers. It is possible that Paul also finds a parallel between Elijah and himself: each is a key salvation-historical figure, is confronted with the apparent downfall of spiritual Israel, but finds new hope in God's preservation of a remnant of true believers. For God's preservation of a remnant is not only evidence of his present faithfulness to Israel; it is also a pledge of hope for the future of the people." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 676f]

GOD'S ELECTION OF THE REMNANT WAS TESTIMONY OF HIS FAITHFULNESS TO ISRAEL — *"In Elijah's time there was a remnant, but the ground of its existence was the initiative of the divine grace, God's gracious election, and not human merit.... It was God, by His own decision and for the accomplishment of His own purpose, who made the remnant to stand firm; and for this very reason its existence was full of promise for the rest of the nation. The existence of a remnant, whose faithfulness was their own meritorious achievement, would have had no particularly hopeful significance for the unfaithful majority. But, precisely because this remnant was preserved in accordance with the election of grace and not on the basis of works, its existence was a pledge of God's continuing interest in, and care for, the nation, a sign of God's faithfulness to His election of Israel as a whole (though it is to be noted that there is certainly no intention in the Elijah narrative to gloss over the reality of God's punishment of Israel's sin — the biggest part of the divine answer in 1 Kings 19:15-18 is in fact concerned with it).... The point that Paul is making is that the remnant of the present time, that is, the company of Jews who have believed in Christ, is a similar remnant, the existence of which is also based not on human deserving (he himself had*

been apprehended by Christ in the midst of his fierce opposition to the gospel), but on God's gracious election, and is therefore also a pledge of the continuing election of Israel as a whole." [Cranfield, *Romans* 9-16, pg 547f]

V 5 — GOD'S GRACIOUS ELECTION PRESERVES A REMNANT — "Paul now makes the comparison between Elijah's situation and his own explicit. As God had 'left for himself' a solid body of faithful worshipers in Elijah's time, so 'at the present time,' the time of eschatological fulfillment, he has brought into existence a 'remnant.' No more than the defection of Israelites to the worship of Baal in Elijah's time could the widespread Jewish indifference to the fulfillment of God's promises in Paul's day invalidate God's faithfulness to Israel and thereby cause his word to 'fall' (cf. 9:6a). *But, Paul is quick to add — reminding us of the principle that he developed at great length in 9:6-29 — this remnant has come into being as the result of God's gracious election. There surfaces here again the careful balance that Paul preserves throughout Romans when dealing with Israel. He affirms the continuing significance of Israel in the stage of salvation history that the gospel has inaugurated. But he denies that this continuing significance owes anything to Israel's intrinsic merit or to her achievement in obeying the law* (note a similar balance in 2:17-3:8; 9:1-29; 11:17-32). *Jews are no different from Gentiles at this point: only by God's gracious intervention can they be transformed from sinners doomed to die into righteous people destined for eternal life* (cf. 3:9, 23-24; 5:12-21)." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 677f]

AT THE PRESENT TIME — "Greek, ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ [en tō nun kairōi]. The combination of νῦν [nun, 'now, present'] and καιρός [kairos, 'a fixed or definite period, a season'] occurs five other times in Paul, four of them denoting the eschatological age of fulfillment (cf. 3:26; 8:18; 2 Cor. 6:2 [twice])." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 677]

V 6 — "The polemical force of 'based on the election of grace' becomes clearer in this verse, as Paul explains just what such a gracious election entails. *The principle of grace is antithetical to that of 'works'; if God has elected the individuals who make up the remnant 'by grace,' it follows that he could not have elected them on the basis of works.* The word 'works' refers to anything that human beings do. Since Paul's focus is on the basis for the election of Israel, it is quite likely that he would think of these human actions as done specifically in obedience to the Mosaic law. But ... it is not the fact that these works are 'torah'-works that prevents them from being a basis for election. As Paul's references to the 'works' of Abraham (4:2-8) and Jacob and Esau (9:10-13) suggest, his problem with 'works' lies not in the fact that they are 'torah'-works but in the fact that they are human works. Paul's polemic, while focused on Israel because of his particular situation, is applicable to all human beings and finds its ultimate basis in the human condition. Because of their sin but also simply because of their creaturely status, people can make no claim on God.

'For if it were otherwise,' if human beings could by their works secure the blessing of God (as Paul points out in the second part of the verse), grace would 'no longer' be grace. For grace demands that God be perfectly free to bestow his favor on whomever he chooses. But if God's election were based on what human beings do, his freedom would be violated and he would no longer be acting in grace. For Paul, however, the gracious character of God's activity is a theological axiom, automatically ruling out any idea that would conflict with it." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 678f]

ELECTION: BASED ON GOD'S CHOICE OR MAN'S FAITH? — "Note the similar argument in Rom. 4:3-5.... [P]aul's teaching here clearly rules out the popular patristic view that God's election is based on foreknowledge of human works. Many modern scholars, however, will insist that God's grace in election is by no means compromised if that election is based on foreseen faith (see, e.g., Godet). To be sure, Paul distinguishes 'works' from faith throughout Romans, and so his denial that election is based on works need not mean that it cannot be based on faith. *But Paul's conception of God's grace (see particularly 4:3-5) would seem to rule out anything outside God's own free will as a basis for his actions. To make election ultimately dependent on the human decision to believe violates Paul's notion of the grace of God. To put it another way, God's grace is for Paul not simply the ultimate cause of salvation. God's grace is the efficient cause of salvation, human faith being not its basis but its result.*" [Moo, *Romans*, pg 679]

V 7 — WHAT THEN? — Paul's rhetorical question marks the beginning of the last section, taking up the implication of his teaching concerning the remnant. *"Paul has asserted that the existence of a remnant, Jews who are Christians, demonstrates that God has not rejected his people. In 9:26-29, Paul uses the remnant concept with a negative nuance: though all Jews are 'Israelites' (9:4), it is only 'the remnant that will be saved.' In 11:2b-6, however, Paul cites the remnant with a positive purpose: the continuing validity of God's election of Israel is manifested in the fact that there is a remnant. Nevertheless, the very notion of a remnant who are receiving the blessings of God's election implies that many other Israelites are not. It is to this group that Paul draws particular attention in vv. 7-10."* [Moo, *Romans*, pg 679]

SUMMATION OF PAUL'S PREVIOUS ARGUMENTS — "Paul begins generally with a summing up of the situation of Israel as he has outlined it thus far in chaps. 9-11.... Verse 7 has therefore an important summary role. It blends the predestinatory focus of 9:6-29 ('elect,' 'hardened') with the human responsibility perspective of 9:30-10:21 ('sought,' 'did not attain') to sum up Paul's discussion of Israel to this point in chaps. 9-11." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 679]

THE ELECT AND THE HARDENED WITHIN CORPORATE ISRAEL — "[Paul] distinguishes three entities: Israel as a corporate whole, the elect, and the hardened. As a corporate entity, Israel has 'not attained' what she 'was seeking.' Paul here repeats in similar terms what he said about Israel as a whole in 9:31: 'Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not attain that

law.’ This parallel allows us to fill in the missing object of the verbs in this assertion: it was ‘righteousness,’ a right standing with God, that Israel sought but failed to attain. What Israel as a whole did not attain, however, ‘the elect’ did. Here again Paul echoes his earlier teaching, where he contrasted Israel’s failure to attain righteousness (9:31) with the Gentiles’ success in doing so (9:30). This earlier contrast leads many commentators to assume that in this verse also ‘the elect’ are composed of Gentiles, or perhaps Gentiles and Jews (all the elect) together. But the context favors a restriction to Jews here since Paul’s concern seems to be to distinguish two groups *within* Israel.

“Contrasted, then, with ‘the elect,’ who have by virtue of God’s gracious choice attained a right standing with him, are ‘the rest,’ who have been ‘hardened.’ Despite a change in verbs in the Greek, the hardening Paul speaks of here is the same as that which he has described in 9:18: a spiritual insensitivity that prevents people from responding to God or to his message of salvation. And since in both 9:18 and in the following verse Paul ascribes this hardening to God, it is clear that God is also the implied agent of the passive verb in this verse: ‘the rest have been hardened (by God).’ Calvin understood this hardening as a pretemporal decree of God by which he destined some to eternal damnation. And Reformed theologians have usually followed Calvin’s lead, finding in this verse support for the doctrine of reprobation.... [T]his conclusion is often denied because Paul suggests in 11:11ff that God’s hardening need not be a permanent condition: a day is coming when God will remove his hardening from Israel (cf. v. 25). But, in contrast to vv. 7b-10, Paul is in vv. 11-32 clearly thinking about Israel from a corporate perspective. The hardening of Israel as a national group, Paul argues, is temporary; but this says nothing about the permanence of his hardening of individual within Israel. And we have seen reason to conclude that God’s hardening permanently binds people in the sin that they have chosen for themselves (see 9:22-23).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 679ff]

v 8 — “In vv. 8-10 Paul supports his reference to hardening with two OT quotations. He follows Jewish precedent in using each of the three main divisions of the Hebrew canon: the ‘law’ (Deut. 29:4), the prophets (Isa. 29:10), and the ‘writings’ (Ps. 69:22-23).

“The quotation in v. 8, introduced with Paul’s typical formula, ‘even as it is written,’ takes most of its wording and its basic structure from Deut. 29:4. This verse comes from one of Moses’ final exhortations to the people of Israel before they crossed the Jordan to take possession of the promised land. Moses reminds them of the great acts of God on their behalf but recognizes that they cannot fully appreciate what the Lord has done for them, for ‘the LORD has not given you a mind to understand, or eyes to see, or ears to hear.’ Paul changes the original negative statement — ‘the LORD has not given’ — into a positive one — ‘God has given.’ This change suits better the purpose for which Paul cites the verse, for he is supporting the notion of a positive act of hardening on God’s part (v. 7b). But Paul is probably also influenced in making this change by another OT text from which he takes some of the wording of his quotation. **The phrase ‘spirit of stupor’ comes from Isa. 29:10: ‘For the LORD has poured upon you a spirit of deep sleep, he has closed your eyes, you prophets, and covered your heads, you seers.’** Paul’s attention was probably drawn to this verse by both the similarity in content with Deut. 29:4 and by the verbal parallel, involving ‘eyes’ that are blinded to the reality of spiritual things. In addition, the text comes in a passage that supplies many NT references and quotations.... While Paul does not clearly allude to the text, it is quite likely that undergirding his use of these texts is Isa. 6:9-10. This became the standard early Christian ‘proof-text’ to explain the spiritual obduracy of the Jews (Mark 4:12 and parallels; John 12:40; Acts 28:26) and has important verbal (‘eyes that do not see,’ ‘ears that do not hear’) and conceptual (‘hardening’) parallels with Paul’s quotation.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 681f]

STUPOR — κατάνυξις [katanuxis] very rare word; used only here in NT and only in Isa. 29:10 and 60:3 in the LXX. It is probably derived from the root verb meaning ‘stab, gouge, prick’ with the sense of being pricked to a point of stupefaction.

v 9, 10 — “The second quotation comes from another passage that has played a prominent role in helping early Christians understand Jesus, Ps. 69 (quotations and probably allusions to this psalm occur in Mark 3:21; 15:23 and parallels; Luke 13:35; John 2:17; 15:25; Acts 1:20; Rom. 15:3; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 16:1). This interpretive tradition, according to which David’s own sentiments in the psalm are applied to Jesus, makes it natural for Paul to apply to the enemies of Jesus Christ what David says about his own enemies. Paul’s attention was probably drawn to these verses also by their reference to ‘darkened eyes,’ a verbal link to Deut. 29:4 and Isa. 29:10. **Verses 22-23 in the psalm introduce David’s prayer that the Lord might bring disaster on those who are persecuting him: ‘Let their table be a trap for them, a snare for their allies. Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and make their loins tremble continually.’ What David prayed would happen to his persecutors, Paul suggests, God has brought upon those Jews who have resisted the gospel.** Paul probably did not intend to apply the details in the quotation to the Jews of his own day. Thus it is fruitless to inquire about what the ‘table’ might stand for, or what ‘bending the backs’ might connote.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 682f]

“Paul here applies to the unbelieving majority of Israel words which were originally the psalmist’s imprecation on his persecutors but which, when the psalm is understood messianically, are naturally referred to the opponents of Christ.... The general sense of this is no doubt a wish that even the good things which these enemies enjoy may prove to be a cause of disaster to them.... With regard to Paul’s use of the words, it is probably wiser to assume that he simply understood them as in a general way suggestive of the divine hardening than to attribute to him any such interpretation of the details.” [Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, pg 551]

The Future of Israel – part 1 (11:11-15)

I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness? 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 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? (Rom 11:11-15 KJV)

Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? (Rom 11:11-15 NIV)

I say, then, Did they stumble that they might fall? let it not be! but by their fall the salvation [is] to the nations, to arouse them to jealousy; and if the fall of them [is] the riches of a world, and the diminution of them the riches of nations, how much more the fullness of them? For to you I speak — to the nations — inasmuch as I am indeed an apostle of nations, my ministrations I do glorify; if by any means I shall arouse to jealousy mine own flesh, and shall save some of them, for if the casting away of them [is] a reconciliation of the world, what the reception — if not life out of the dead? (Rom 11:11-15 Young's Literal Translation)

“With a rhetorical question parallel to the one in v. 1, Paul moves into the next — and final — stage of his discussion of Israel and the gospel. As he has summarized the matter in vv. 7-10, the gospel has divided Israel into two groups: a ‘remnant,’ who through the electing grace of God has attained the righteousness revealed in the gospel, and ‘the rest,’ hardened by God in their sin and excluded from this righteousness. Paul now asks whether this situation is permanent. His answer? It is not. For the ‘rejection’ of Israel as a whole is not God’s last word to Israel. This rejection, Paul argues, is but the first step in an unfolding process. Its second step is of special relevance to the Gentiles: Israel’s repudiation of the blessings naturally belonging to her has caused them to be diverted into another, wider, channel, in which they are now flowing to the whole world. But this is not the end of the story. For this flood of blessings will one day be turned again toward Israel. At the climax of this age, her hardening will be removed, and the present tiny remnant of Jewish believers will be expanded to include a much greater number of Jews obedient to the gospel. And so, as Paul puts it in his famous assertion, ‘all Israel will be saved.’ Israel’s rejection is neither total (11:1-10) nor final (11:11-32).

“The three-stage process by which God’s blessing oscillates between Israel and the Gentiles is at the heart of this entire section, as the following summary reveals:

vv. 11-12: ‘trespass of Israel’ — ‘salvation for the Gentiles’ — ‘their fullness’

v. 15: ‘their rejection’ — ‘reconciliation of the world’ — ‘their acceptance’

vv. 17-23: ‘natural branches’ broken off — ‘wild shoots’ grafted in — ‘natural branches’ grafted back in

vv. 25-26: ‘hardening of Israel’ — ‘fullness of Gentiles’ — ‘all Israel will be saved’

vv. 30-31: disobedience of Israel — mercy for Gentiles — mercy to Israel

The presence of this pattern throughout these verses points to the underlying unity of this section. However, it falls into three clearly distinguishable paragraphs: vv. 11-15, vv. 16-24, and vv. 25-32. In each of these paragraphs Paul directly address Gentile Christians: cf. v. 13, ‘I am speaking to you Gentiles,’ and the continuation of this address with the second person singular [‘you’ or ‘thou’] in vv. 17-24 and the second person plural [‘you’ or ‘ye’] in vv. 25-32. This address reveals the specific hortatory purpose of Paul’s sketch of salvation history: to stifle the tendency among Gentile Christians to ‘boast over’ Jews and Jewish Christians (cf. vv. 18 and 25; note also 14:3). *Paul knew that Gentile Christians in Rome were engaging in such inappropriate bragging; and the need to curb this sinful pride was one of his main motivations in writing chaps. 9-11 and, indeed, the letter as a whole. But, in keeping with the nature of Romans, Paul also knew that the problem he was tackling here was endemic in the early Christian church. For the problem was an understandable outgrowth of the shift of salvation history that had taken place. The Gentiles’ rejoicing at being included with Jews in God’s people would all too easily lead to boasting that they had replaced the Jews as the people of God. Sorry to say, such an assumption is still rampant in the Christian church: witness the typical contrast ‘Jew’ / ‘Christian.’ Paul therefore warns us, as he warned the first-century Gentile Christians in Rome: don’t assume that Gentile preponderance in the church means that God has abandoned his people Israel. God has brought salvation to the Gentiles without violating any of his promises to Israel and without retracting his election of Israel as a corporate whole: an election that, like all God’s gifts, is ‘irrevocable’ (v. 29).* [Moo, *Romans*, pg 683ff]

“The exclusion of the great majority of Jews is not permanent. It is the occasion for the coming in of the Gentiles, which, in its turn, is to have the effect of awakening the unbelieving Jews to a realization of what they are missing and so to lead to their repentance. Paul hopes that the very success of his own mission to the Gentiles may contribute in this way to the saving of some of his compatriots. And, if the present exclusion of the majority of Jews means so rich a benefit for the Gentiles, what glory shall accompany their final restoration? In the meantime the existence of those Jews who already believe in Christ serves to sanctify the unbelieving majority. What Paul says in this subsection and also in the following one is especially addressed to the Gentiles among the Christians of Rome (cf. v. 13a). He is clearly concerned to warn them against adopting an unchristian attitude of

superiority toward the unbelieving Jews. It seems more probable that it is for the sake of directness and forcefulness that the second person singular [*you, thou*] is used in vv. 17-24 (Paul singling out each individual Gentile Christian) than that the use is collective. The olive-tree imagery of these verses has caused a good many commentators to make heavy weather; but Paul's meaning is not in doubt. The contemplation of his situation in relation to the unbelieving Jews should lead the Gentile Christian not to haughtiness but to fear for himself; and he ought to realize that God can and will restore the unbelieving Jews." [Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, pg 553f]

"The opening question shows that Paul wants to deny an inference that his readers might draw from what he has just said. According to most commentators, this potential inference is that God's hardening of the 'remainder' (v. 7b) of Israel is permanent. Paul corrects this possible misunderstanding by denying that these hardened Jews have fallen into irretrievable spiritual ruin. But the antecedent to the third person possessive pronouns in v. 12 — 'their' — must be Israel as a whole and not the hardened 'remainder' only. And the continuity between vv. 11 and 12 demands that the implied subject of the third person plural verbs in v. 11 be the same: Israel as a whole. Paul's question in v. 11, therefore, is not related to vv. 7b-10 but to v. 7a, which restates a key point that Paul has made earlier: Israel (as a whole) has not attained righteousness that it was seeking (see esp. 9:31-32; also 10:3, 21). The issue in vv. 11ff is there not 'Can the hardened Israel still be saved?' but 'Can Israel as a whole still be saved?' As the contrast with the Gentiles throughout vv. 11-32 suggests, Paul is thinking mainly in terms of corporate bodies, not in terms of individuals within these bodies. The structure of this paragraph follows a familiar model: rhetorical question, emphatic denial (v. 11a), and explanation (vv. 11b-15). The explanation uses the pattern of oscillation between Israel and the Gentiles that is basic to this whole section. Paul introduces this sequence in v. 11b and then develops it fully in v. 12. After a parenthetical remark about his own ministry (vv. 13-14), Paul repeats the sequence in different terms in v. 15." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 686f]

"The awkwardness in the structure of this section probably stems from the fact that with each sentence Paul is ready to go at once into the final mystery (11:25-32), so that he seems to repeat himself unnecessarily." [Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, pg 651]

V 11 — HAS CORPORATE ISRAEL FALLEN INTO A IRRETRIEVABLE SPIRITUAL STATE DUE TO HER REJECTION OF CHRIST? — *"The opening of this paragraph parallels the opening of vv. 1-10 exactly: 'I say therefore,' a rhetorical question expecting a negative answer, followed by emphatic rejection: 'By no means!' Paul's question, as we have seen, picks up his summary assertion about Israel as a whole in v. 7a: 'They [Israelites generally] have not stumbled so as to fall, have they?' Israel's 'stumbling' refers to her rejection of Christ and the righteousness of God through him (9:31-33; 10:3), while 'fall' denotes irretrievable spiritual ruin."* [Moo, *Romans*, pg 686f]

GOD'S PURPOSE IN ISRAEL'S FALL: SALVATION TO THE GENTILES / JEALOUSY TO THE JEWS — "In contrast ('but') to the inference that Israel's rejection of Christ has forever excluded her from any special place in God's purposes in the actual situation: Israel's sin is the starting point of a process that will lead back to blessing for Israel. The middle stage of this process involves the Gentiles. It is 'because of' Israel's 'trespass' that salvation has come to the Gentiles. Paul probably has in mind the way in which he and other preachers of the gospel would turn to the Gentiles after being spurned by the Jews. But the salvation of Gentiles leads in turn back to Israel. Borrowing the concept from Deut. 32:21, which he quoted in 10:19, Paul indicates that one of the purposes of the salvation of the Gentiles is to stimulate Israel to jealousy. Paul apparently thinks that the Jews, as they see the Gentiles enjoying the messianic blessings promised first of all to them, will want those blessings for themselves." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 687f]

FALL — *παράπτωμα* [paraptōma] Paul uses the term 16 times; of particular interest are the six occurrences of the term in Rom. 5:15-21 to describe the sin of Adam and his heirs. *The Greek word used here, paraptōma, "... is frequently used by Paul to denote 'trespass', 'sin' (in the sense of a particular sinful deed), and it is clear that what is referred to here is the sin committed by the ['rest'] in rejecting the gospel.... Paul's meaning by the statement as a whole is generally explained by reference to Acts 8.1ff; 13.45-48; 18.6; 28.24-28; and it is indeed likely that Paul did have in mind the fact that it was the rejection of the gospel message by the Jews which compelled the messengers to turn to the Gentiles."* [Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, pg 555f]

V 12 — "Paul now elaborates on the process he has introduced in v. 11b, using the familiar 'how much more' logic (see 5:9, 10, 15, 17) to contrast the benefits of Israel's rejection of Christ with the blessing that will come with Israel's 'fullness.' His purpose is thus to accentuate the importance of this final stage in the process. And, as his way of referring to Israel reveals — *their* trespass, *their* diminution, *their* fullness — he seems already to have in mind Gentile readers. Paul wants Gentile Christians to recognize the significance for themselves of Israel's restoration to divine favor." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 688]

"What Paul is saying is: If the present unbelief of the majority of Israel actually means the enrichment of the Gentiles, how much more wonderfully enriching must the situation resulting from the provoking to jealousy of this majority of Israel be!" [Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, pg 557f]

DIMINISHING, LOSS — "The first part of the verse (the 'if' clause) repeats the first two steps Paul outlined in v. 11b. Paul speaks again of Israel's 'trespass,' but characterizes it a second time with the term *hētēma*. This rare word is sometimes given a

qualitative meaning — KJV: ‘diminishing’ — in order to preserve a more effective contrast with the word *plērōma* [fullness], which, it is argued, must be translated ‘full number.’ But *hēttēma* seems to have a basically quantitative nuance, denoting a ‘defeat’ or ‘loss,’ and this sense also fits the context well: Israel’s trespass in rejecting Christ has been for her a signal spiritual defeat. But Israel’s loss has been the Gentile’s gain: her trespass has meant ‘riches for the world’; her defeat ‘riches for the Gentiles.’ Yet the logic of Paul’s sentence implies that the blessing that will come to the Gentiles at the time of Israel’s ‘fullness’ will be much greater. What is implicit here is made explicit in v. 15, where Paul identifies this blessing as ‘life from the dead.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 688f]

dim-i-nu-tion — noun: the act or process of diminishing; a lessening or reduction

FULLNESS — “But what specifically does Paul mean when he speaks of ‘their [the Jews’] fullness’? The Greek word is *plērōma*, and it denotes ‘full measure,’ ‘completeness.’ Like *hēttēma* [diminishing, loss], the ‘fullness’ denoted by *plērōma* is sometimes understood in a qualitative sense — ‘fulfillment,’ ‘completeness’ (cf. NASB) — and sometimes a quantitative sense — ‘full number’ (cf. TEV: ‘the complete number of Jews’).... While *plērōma* probably has a qualitative denotation — ‘fullness’ — the context and the parallel with v. 25 suggest that this ‘fullness’ is attained through a numerical process. Paul would then be suggesting that the present ‘defeat’ of Israel, in which Israel is numerically reduced to a small remnant, will be reversed by the addition of far greater numbers of true believers: this will be Israel’s destined ‘fullness.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 689f]

ISRAEL’S FULLNESS: PRESENT OR FUTURE? — “A few commentators (e.g., Lenski, Hendriksen) suggest that Israel’s ‘fullness’ is something that she has already attained in Paul’s day. But this flies in the face of Paul’s pessimism about Israel’s present status. As the following verses will show (cf. esp. 17-24), Paul presents Israel’s ‘fullness’ as a future occurrence.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 690]

RICHES — “Gk. πλοῦτος [ploutos], here indicating the richness of spiritual blessing. Paul frequently uses the word to refer to the riches of God’s grace and mercy (cf. Rom. 2:4; 9:23; 11:33; Eph. 1:7, 18; 2:7; 3:8, 16; Phil. 4:17; Col. 1:27).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 688]

v 13 — PARENTHETICAL THOUGHTS CONCERNING PAUL’S OWN

MINISTRY — “In vv. 11b-12 Paul has justified his denial of the idea that Israel might be permanently excluded from the plan of God. He does so by arguing that Israel’s present spiritual ‘defeat’ will give way to a ‘fullness’ of spiritual blessing once again. And this renewed state of blessing will be brought about through the medium of the Gentiles’ salvation. It is this role played by the salvation of the Gentiles in Israel’s future blessing that is the jumping off point for Paul’s remarks about his own ministry in vv. 13-14. Paul points out that the role played by Gentiles in the ultimate blessing of Israel means that his own ministry, largely devoted to the Gentiles, has nevertheless a significant indirect impact on Israel. These verses are something of an aside, a parenthesis that anticipates the hortatory direction that Paul takes his argument in vv. 17-24.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 690f]

hor-ta-to-ry — adj : marked by exhortation or strong urging

PAUL GLORIES IN HIS MINISTRY TO THE GENTILES PARTIALLY TO SEE JEWS SAVED — “Verse 13a — ‘Now I am speaking to you Gentiles’ — reveals Paul’s concern to apply what he is saying in this passage to the Gentile Christian majority in the church at Rome (as most commentators recognize, this address suggests that the majority of the Christians at Rome were Gentiles, since Paul does not say ‘I am speaking to those of you who are Gentiles.’). In vv. 13-14 he is specifically concerned to correct any misapprehension among the Gentile Christians about the implications for Israel in his concentration on Gentiles in his ministry. For we can understand how Gentile Christians might appeal to Paul himself, ‘the apostle to the Gentiles,’ as further reason to disdain Jews and Jewish Christians. ‘You see,’ they might argue, ‘Paul himself, though a Jew, has given up on his own people and devoting all his efforts to us, the Gentiles.’ True, Paul responds, in accordance with God’s particular call on my life, I have spent most of time ministering to Gentiles. But contrary to what you might expect, to the degree that I am apostle to the Gentiles, I ‘glorify my ministry’ — I take pride in it and work very hard at it — with the hope that it will indirectly serve to bring Jewish people into the kingdom of God (cf. v. 14; Paul is not, of course, saying that this is the only reason he engages in that ministry, nor even that it is the most important reason for it. His purpose here is the limited one of showing that this is *one* of the motivations in his work).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 691]

“We might paraphrase: ‘Contrary to what you may be inclined to think’. It would be natural for them to suppose that in turning to the Gentiles Paul was turning his back upon the unbelieving Jews. But quite the contrary it true: his very labours as apostle of the Gentiles have an Israel-ward significance — of good for Israel.” [Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, pg 559]

v 14 — “Paul’s hope that his preaching to Gentiles will have a positive impact on Jews is based on the ‘jealousy’ theme that he introduced in v. 11b. As God uses Paul’s preaching to bring more and more Gentiles to salvation, Paul hopes that Jews, his own ‘flesh and blood,’ will become jealous and seek for themselves the blessings of this salvation. In these verses Paul reveals his sense of being a significant figure in salvation history. As ‘apostle to the Gentiles,’ he has a critical — and controversial — role to play in the unfolding plan of God for the nations and for Israel. But Paul’s modesty in the last part of v. 14 shows that we must not overestimate the importance that he assigned to his own ministry. By limiting the hoped-for fruits of his ministry to ‘some of them’ (e.g., Jews), Paul suggests that he does not see himself (as some imagine) as the figure whom God will use to bring Israel to its destined ‘fullness.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 692]

PAUL IS REALISTIC ABOUT THE IMPACT OF HIS PARTICULAR MINISTRY — “While Paul may indeed have expected his Gentile mission to disturb the Jewish nation as a whole, he clearly expects it to result in the conversion of only some individuals out of it. Murray comments well: ‘But his zeal does not spill over into any excessive claims for the success of his ministry nor does he presume to state how his ministry of provoking to jealousy is related either causally or temporally to the “fullness” of Israel.’” [Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, pg 561]

v 15 — “This verse takes up v. 12 and establishes vv. 13f. The latter relationship is indicated by the ‘for’ at the beginning of the verse: Paul earnestly seeks to stimulate Israel to jealousy and save ‘some of’ his fellow Jews (vv. 13-14), ‘for’ Israel’s return to divine favor will mean unprecedented blessing for the world (v. 15). At the same time, v. 15 restates the process that Paul has introduced in vv. 11b-12. This restatement, however, uses a different syntactical and logical structure — the ‘if ... how much more’ sequence of v. 12 gives way to an ‘if ... what’ sequence in v. 15 — and different terminology. This different terminology brings two emphases in comparison with vv. 11b-12. First, whereas the earlier text implied, by means of the ‘jealousy’ motif, the importance of human response, v. 15 stresses God’s initiative in the process. Second, the final and climatic stage of the process, only hinted at in v. 12, is now spelled out: ‘life from the dead.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 692]

REJECTION AND ACCEPTANCE — “Paul’s focus on God’s superintendence of the process is indicated first in the phrase ‘their rejection.’ The word translated ‘rejection’ means ‘a throwing away’ or ‘loss.’ It could refer here to the Jews’ ‘loss’ of salvation or to their ‘throwing away,’ or ‘rejection,’ of salvation or of the Lord himself. But two points favor the rendering ‘their [the Jews’] rejection [*by* God].’ First, Paul uses the word ‘acceptance’ in the second half of the verse as a direct contrast to ‘rejection.’ And, while the word Paul uses here does not occur anywhere else in the NT, Paul uses a verb related to it in Rom. 14:3 and 15:7 to refer to God’s and Christ’s ‘accepting’ of believers. This strongly suggests that ‘acceptance’ refers to ‘God’s acceptance of the Jews’; ‘rejection,’ by contrast, would refer to ‘God’s rejection of the Jews.’ A second reason for adopting this rendering is the emphasis Paul places throughout this section on God’s responsibility for Israel’s present spiritual obduracy. ‘God has given them a spirit of stupor’ (v. 8); they have been ‘cut off [by God]’ (v. 17).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 693]

REJECTION, CAST AWAY — ἀποβολή [apobolē] is only found one other place in the NT: Acts 27:22, ‘for there shall be the *loss* of not one life from among you — except the boat [shall be lost].’ The word is not found in the LXX but is used by Josephus, ‘but there shall be the *loss* of these things [cities and temple] not once, but many times.’

RECONCILIATION OF THE WORLD — “Echoing vv. 11b and 12, Paul indicates that God’s rejection of the Jews has meant ‘the reconciliation of the world.’ ‘Reconciliation,’ as in Rom. 5:11 (and note the corresponding verb in 5:10), refers to God’s act of bringing sinners into a peaceful relationship with himself. *Paul is again speaking in corporate categories; the ‘reconciliation of the world’ does not mean that every human being has been saved. As in v. 12, ‘world’ refers to the Gentiles, and Paul’s point is that Israel’s rejection has made it possible for Gentiles, as a group, to experience Christ’s reconciling work.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 694]

LIFE FROM THE DEAD — “If, then, Paul argues, God’s ‘casting away’ of Israel has led to this extension to Gentiles of God’s salvation, what will be the result of God’s taking Israel to himself again? Nothing less than ‘life from the dead.’ *Debate over the meaning of this phrase has been intense; nothing in chap. 11 except ‘All Israel will be saved’ in v. 26 has sparked more disagreement.* The logic of the verse shows that it must refer to a blessing even greater or more climatic than the extension of reconciliation to the Gentiles. For Paul argues from the lesser to the greater: if something negative like Israel’s rejection means that Gentiles are being reconciled to God, how much greater must be the result of something positive like Israel’s acceptance? Opinions about what this greater blessing might be fall into two general categories.

- We can interpret ‘life from the dead’ **literally**, understanding the phrase to refer to the general resurrection that will take place after the return of Christ in glory, or to the blessed life that will follow that resurrection (see esp. 1 Cor. 15:22-24; also Matt. 25:31-46; Rom. 6:6 (?), 8 (?); 8:11, 23; Phil. 3:10-11; 1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 20:4-6; this view was adopted by most of the early Greek fathers as Origen, Chrysostom, and by many Puritans; see also Bruce, Black, Cranfield, Dunn).
- We can interpret ‘life from the dead’ **metaphorically**, as a way of referring to a great and unprecedented blessing, whether this be a spiritual quickening of the whole world (possible suggested in the Prodigal son’s return in Luke 15:24; most of the later Greek fathers took this view; see also Murray, Godet, Denney, Morris, Haldane, Lenski) or the spiritual ‘coming back to life’ of Israel (as in Ezekiel’s valley of dry bones; see also Calvin).

“Three considerations favor the former. First, while the actual phrase ‘*life from the dead*’ [ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν, zōē ek nekron] never occurs elsewhere in the Bible, the phrase ‘*from the dead*’ [ἐκ νεκρῶν, ek nekron] is found 47 times in the NT; and every occurrence except one comes in a phrase referring to the resurrection. To be sure, the one exception is an important one, for it involves the closest parallel in Paul to the phrase he uses here, ‘those who are alive out of the dead’ (Rom. 6:13). This phrase refers to Christians who are spiritually ‘living,’ having been brought out of a state of death. However, it is important to note that Paul prefaces the phrase with the word ‘as.’ By thereby adding an explicit indicator that he is giving the phrase a metaphorical nuance, he seems to bear witness indirectly to the normal literal force of the words. It is also argued that, had Paul wanted to refer to resurrection here, he would have explicitly used that word; see, for example, ‘resurrection of the dead’ in 1 Cor. 15:12. There is some point to this objection; it is likely therefore that ‘life from the dead’ refers to the new life that comes after resurrection rather

than to resurrection itself.

“A second reason to prefer a literal rendering of this phrase arises from a consideration of Paul’s other descriptions of the process that he depicts here in v. 15. These descriptions suggest that ‘life from the dead’ must be an event distinct from Israel’s restoration, involving the whole world, and occurring at the very end of history. The logic of v. 12 implies that the event that follows the ‘fullness’ of Israel will have, like Israel’s ‘trespass,’ an impact on the (Gentile) world. And vv. 25-26 suggest that the salvation of Israel comes only after God has brought into the kingdom all the Gentiles destined to be saved. No room is therefore left for a spiritual quickening of the world; all that remains is consummation.

“A third factor favoring a reference to the end of history is the apocalyptic worldview that lies behind Paul’s teaching at this point. To be sure, the nature of the apocalyptic and the degree of its influence on Paul are debated; but Paul gives many explicit indications in both the structure of his argument and in his vocabulary that he is deeply influenced by apocalyptic conceptions in Rom. 9-11, and especially in 11:12-32. Yet most Jewish apocalyptic thinking focused on the events leading to, and bringing in, the end of history. A standard apocalyptic pattern featured the restoration of Israel as the event that would bring in the eschatological consummation. Since we are justified in thinking that Paul builds his teaching here on apocalyptic, a reference to resurrection at the end of history seems likely.

“Therefore, as Israel’s ‘trespass’ (vv. 11,12) and ‘rejection’ (v. 15) trigger the stage of salvation history in which Paul (and we) are located, a stage in which God is specially blessing Gentiles, so Israel’s ‘fullness’ (v. 12) and ‘acceptance’ (v. 15) will trigger the climatic end of salvation history. Paul insists on the vital, continuing significance of Israel in salvation history, against tendencies among Gentile Christians to discard Israel from any further role in the plan of God. However, Paul is silent about the timing of these events. Indeed, many commentators think that Paul’s own role in this process (vv. 13-14) suggests that he was sure that the culmination of this process would take place within his lifetime. But, as we have seen, Paul’s own view of his role in the process was much more modest. Like the rest of the NT, Paul leaves the timing of these events in the hands of God. ...

“Paul, of course, says nothing here about any stage between the final restoration of Israel and the enjoyment of eschatological life. But nothing in the verse contradicts the conception either. If one is convinced (as I am) on the basis of other texts, such as Rev. 20, that the NT predicts an ‘interim’ stage of eschatological fulfillment between the parousia and the eternal state — a ‘millennium’ — then Paul’s outline of events in this chapter need not be a problem. As is often the case in the NT, Paul here telescopes eschatological events, omitting those not immediately relevant to his argument.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 694ff]

“But, since [life out of the dead] must clearly denote something surpassing everything signified by [salvation] in v. 11, by [fullness of the world] and [fullness of the Gentiles] in v. 12, and by [reconciliation of the world] in the present verse, it cannot denote the spiritual blessings already being enjoyed by the believing Gentiles.... [I]t is difficult to resist the conclusion that [life out of the dead] should be taken to mean the final resurrection itself (an interpretation maintained by very many from early times to the present day) and that Paul’s meaning is that the [acceptance] of the mass of Israel can signify nothing less than the final consummation of all things.” [Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, pg 562f]

“Verses 12 and 15 are remarkably parallel.... In both verses Paul argues from the lesser to the greater. If the sin of Israel has led to the riches of salvation for the Gentiles and to reconciliation of the Gentiles to God, then the effect of the conversion of the Jews will be even more astounding. ... The main point in verse 15 is that God’s acceptance of the Jews is nothing less than ‘life from the dead.’ Some understand this phrase to refer merely to the salvation of the Jewish Christians. According to this interpretation the words ‘life from the dead’ define the ‘acceptance’ mentioned. But the parallelism of verse 15 with verse 12 implies that something more obtains from the salvation of the Jews (‘how much more their fullness!’). **Most scholars concur that a greater benefit is envisioned as a result of Israel’s salvation.** Some have maintained that the spiritual progress of the gospel in the world is intended. The gospel will have even greater success among Gentiles after Israel as a whole is saved. Most scholars, however, rightly understand the phrase ‘life from the dead’ to refer to the physical resurrection of the dead. That is, the salvation of ‘all Israel’ (cf. 11:26) will be the climax of this age, and will be followed by the resurrection. Even though the phrase [out from the dead] may refer to spiritual life (cf. Rom. 6:13; Eph. 5:14), it usually relates to physical resurrection. This interpretation is confirmed by Jewish tradition in which the end is delayed until the full number of the elect are saved. What is finally decisive for the last interpretation is the argument of Rom. 11:23-27. Paul argues that the salvation of Israel will *follow* the salvation of the Gentiles. It is after the ‘fullness of Gentiles enters in’ (11:25) that ‘all Israel will be saved’ (11:26). If the fullness of the Gentiles enters in before Israel is saved, it is inconceivable that there will be a great ingathering among the Gentiles *after* this event. The physical resurrection of the dead and the climax of history are almost certainly in view.” [Schreiner, *Romans*, pg 596ff]

MILLENNIAL REBIRTH? — “In speaking of life from the dead, Paul was not referring to bodily resurrection. Regarding individual Jews, he was speaking of receiving spiritual life as a gracious gift to displace spiritual death, the wage of unbelief. Regarding Israel, he was speaking of its rebirth and the rebirth of the whole world in the glorified millennial kingdom of God. In that glorious day, even ‘the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God’ (Rom. 8:21).” [MacArthur, *Romans 9-16*, pg 111]