

Romans 11 – All Israel Will Be Saved
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There are a vast number of views concerning what Paul means when he uses the expression *all Israel will be saved*, in Romans 11. The divergence of views concerning Paul's meaning is quite dramatic. Thus, it would be a little arrogant to use a term like *clearly* when referring to this Scripture. The views basically revolve around one's overall view of Soteriology, and especially of the Millenium in general.

The breakdown is basically as follows:

1. Dispensational View – The Dispensational view holds that Paul's reference to Israel pertains to the geo-political state of Israel, more so than to just Jews in general. Adherents to this view see such events as are happening to the modern state of Israel as fulfilling Bible prophecy. They see a time in the future in which God will deal with Israel again as a nation, apart and separate from, the Gentiles. This will happen via the Rapture of the *supposed* Gentile Church.
2. Classical Postmillennial View – The Classical Postmillennial view, like the Dispensational view, also holds that Paul's reference to Israel pertains to natural Israel. However, by Israel, Paul means ethnic Jews, or Physical descendants of Abraham, rather than the geo-political state of Israel. This view holds that God will also deal with Israel en masse, but not apart or separate from the Gentiles. Rather, it will be through the Gentiles that God brings salvation to the Jews. Furthermore, this view holds that there then must be a mass conversion of the Jews in the future, before the second coming of Christ.
3. Amillennial View – The Amillennial view holds different viewpoints on Paul's use of the term *all Israel* in Romans 11. Some Postmillennialists also fit into this category.
 - a. Calvin's View: Most Amillennialists hold to John Calvin's view that Paul is referring not to natural Israel in the phrase *all Israel*, but rather to spiritual Israel, the Elect. That is, those both from the Jews and Gentiles whom God has chosen to save. These two together make up the one Olive Tree, *Israel*, and thus, all Israel (in the spiritual sense) will be saved.
 - b. All Remnants: Some Amillennialists hold that the phrase *all Israel* refers to natural Israel indeed, but not to the nation as a whole at any time in history. Rather, this view holds that *all Israel* refers to the sum total of all ethnic Jews throughout the Church Age that are saved. This view states that the partial hardening of the Jews lasts until the Second Coming, and Paul is explaining the manner by which all Israel that will be saved, will be saved. This view also rejects that there will ever be a mass conversion of Jews at any point in the future.
 - c. Israel as a whole: This is the minority view among the others. This view holds that Paul is not referring to number in the phrase *all Israel*, but to status pertaining to participation in God's plan of salvation in the New Covenant. Therefore, Paul's comment concerning *all Israel* refers to the Jews as a whole, but does not mean that the whole nation, or every Jew,

will be saved. Rather, it means that God at some point in time, would once again include the whole nation of Israel in His plan, once the hardening that God placed upon them had passed. This view does not deal with numbers, but eligibility. This view sees the partial hardening of Israel as being already passed and done away with. There are some minor differences of opinion within this view concerning other points.

This paper will deal primarily with explaining Romans 11 from the last view (c). Although it is the minor view, I believe it to be the most accurate.

In Romans 11, Paul is concluding an argument he started in chapter 9. Romans 9-11, should always be taken together as a whole unit, because it is the same monologue all the way through. Thus, in Romans 11, Paul is concluding his defense of the statement he made in chapter 9, *it is not as though God's word had failed*. Paul is addressing here the question, *If God has rejected Israel does that mean they are forever excluded from the plan of God?*, and subsequently, *Does that mean God's promises to them have failed?* Paul's answer is an emphatic *No!* Thus, he begins to explain how and why God rejected Israel, and that this was no coincidence, but the plan of God all along to bring salvation to the ends of the earth. Let us now look to the passage in detail and see what Paul is trying to say concerning Israel, and the redemptive plan of God.

Vss.1-6

¹I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. ²God 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: ³"Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me"? ⁴And what was God's answer to him? "I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." ⁵So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. ⁶And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

Paul begins with a question. Did God reject His people? By *His people*, not the Elect are meant, but natural Israel it is quite clear. Paul clarifies this by mentioning that he is also an Israelite. How does Paul define *Israelite* here? *A descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin.*

Therefore, the next statement is referring to the exact same group. When Paul says that *God did not reject His people whom He foreknew*, he again is referring to natural Israel, and not the Elect specifically. In fact, elsewhere in Scripture God states that He had foreknown natural Israel. The fact that God chose to save a remnant of Israel meant that God had not totally forsaken Israel.

Next, Paul uses the example of Elijah's pleading with God to illustrate that God had not totally rejected Israel. Just as God had reserved seven thousand men in Elijah's time, so also in Paul's time God had reserved a remnant out of Israel to be saved. Thus, Israel's rejection, Paul asserts, is not total. In fact, Paul himself was evidence of this. He was a Jew, and yet had been saved. He was a walking testimony to the fact that God had not totally rejected the Jews. Paul's conclusion then is that *at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace*. By the phrase, *present time*, Paul, of course, is referring to his own time in the first century.

Vss. 7-10

⁷What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, ⁸as 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." ⁹And David says:*

*"May their table become a snare and a trap,
a stumbling block and a retribution for them.*

*¹⁰May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see,
and their backs be bent forever."*

Paul states that Israel as a whole had failed to obtain the righteousness that it sought. However, the Elect, which is the remnant spoken of earlier, did obtain it. So what about the rest of Israel that did not receive Christ? Paul states that the rest of the Jews as a whole were hardened, meaning, that God purposely withheld the ability to receive the Gospel and be saved from them. This was God's judgment upon Israel for their constant disobedience which culminated in the rejection of His Son. It is in this way that God's rejection of Israel had begun. Nevertheless, Paul emphatically states that this rejection is not total.

Vss. 11-15

¹¹Again 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. ¹²But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!

¹³I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry ¹⁴in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. ¹⁵For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

Paul then asks another question that he imagines might be put forth in opposition to his argument. That question is, Did Israel *stumble so as to fall beyond recovery*? In other words, did unbelieving Israel completely and finally fall away from God so far that they can never be saved? Notice that Paul uses the word *they*. Who is the *they* he is speaking of? Look back in verse 7. Paul says, *the others were hardened*. In verse 11 then, Paul is speaking of the same group: the unbelieving Jews that were hardened to the Gospel. He is asking if they are beyond the scope of salvation. Are they now finally and completely outside the New Covenant? Again, Paul's emphatic answer is *Not at all!*

Paul then states that Israel's fall has resulted in salvation for the Gentiles. There is a reason for this, Paul says. The reason for saving the Gentiles, among other things, is to make the Jews jealous. Which Jews? The very same Jews that were hardened. This means that Israel's fall and hardening was not only, not total, but it was not to be permanent either! Again, since Paul is here contrasting Israel with the Gentiles, he does not have the Church in mind. The Israel of God (spiritual Israel) is made of both Jew and Gentile, but that is not what Paul is speaking of here. *But if their transgression means riches for the world (the nations), and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring?* There is no doubt that Paul is here speaking of the same ethnic Jews that transgressed and fell, and not the church.

At this point, some commentators would argue that Israel will one day be restored to the same degree that it fell. Israel fell almost totally; therefore, it will be restored almost totally. However, this is not necessarily the case. The word fullness that's used here is the Greek word *Pleroma*. This word means literally *to fill*. It can refer to that which is put in to fill up, and also that which is filled up, i.e. the container. Some translations render this word *full-inclusion*. This is a more accurate way of using the word in the context. Paul is describing the state or condition that Israel had come to be in. They had transgressed, a state or condition, and they had fallen, a state or condition. Consequently, Paul is saying that they have been rejected from participating in the New Covenant. That is why they were blinded or hardened. Paul is discussing the state of eligibility that Israel is in pertaining to their participation in the New Covenant. Further reading will be necessary, however, to substantiate this. Basically, Paul is saying, *By their rejection, salvation has come to the rest of the world, but by their re-inclusion, how much greater salvation will that be, but all of humanity?*

It's interesting that Paul begins this next part by saying something like, *Hello! I'm talking to YOU!* It's been said that anti-Jewish sentiment was supposedly growing among the Gentiles. I don't know if that's the case, but they very well must not have been making very much effort to win the Jews to Christ. Paul is letting them know that it's their job as Gentiles to evangelize the Jews. Furthermore, Paul says *I'm making much of my ministry and I'm hoping that, even though I'm a Jew also, I might also make my own people jealous, and somehow, maybe, I might save some of them by doing so.*

NOW is where Paul repeats his statement made earlier in verse 12. In verse 15, he repeats what he meant in verse 12 using different words. In verse 12 he had said, *But if*

their transgression means riches for the world (the nations), and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring? In verse 15, Paul again says For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

So we see that by their transgression and loss came their rejection. By their fullness then, Paul is speaking of their acceptance. Once again, Paul is describing the status of Israel as it relates to the New Covenant and the plan of salvation in Christ Jesus. He is not speaking of number here, but of inclusion. Israel as a whole was rejected, and Israel as a whole will be accepted back. This does not mean that Israel as a whole is saved, or will be saved. This means that Israel as a whole will no longer be sovereignly blinded by God. In this way, they will be reinstated into participation. Yet further reading will only substantiate this even more.

Vss. 16-21

¹⁶If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches. ¹⁷If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, ¹⁸do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." ²⁰Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. ²¹For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

Various and somewhat wild conjectures have been put forward by some concerning Paul's first few statements here in this section. However, we must keep the conversation in context. Paul has been contrasting the part of Israel, the remnant which was accepted, versus the whole of Israel, which was rejected. This is the context behind the words. Paul says, *If part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.* Paul puts forth the principle behind his thinking in Jewish terms by comparing Israel to a batch of dough that is offered as an offering at the temple. If the part offered as firstfruits, (the remnant of Israel that was accepted into the New Covenant), is holy, then the whole batch, (the rest of Israel that was rejected) is holy also. If the root (the same remnant of Israel) is holy, so are the branches (the rest of Israel).

Paul then states that for Israel as a whole, they are like branches that have been broken off of a tree, leaving a huge bare place. Paul tells the Gentiles that if God has been gracious enough to graft them into that bare place and allow them to participate in the New Covenant, then they shouldn't boast against the Jews. God was obligated in no way whatsoever to break them off to begin with. Neither was He obligated to graft the Gentiles in. So we should all be thankful, and not proud.

Again, the theme behind Paul's parable is participation in the dough, and participation in the tree. The tree gains life by the nourishing sap, which I take to mean eternal life. The emphasis isn't on numbers of but of eligibility and participation.

Vss. 22-24

²²Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. ²³And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

It is worth mentioning here that one reason so many people have problems with these verses is for the very reason of focusing on numbers and how many are saved, rather than status and participation. For example, Paul says twice now that the Gentiles must not boast, for they could also very well be cut off from the tree. The question is, one, is Paul speaking to them as Christians, or as Gentiles? The question is, two, is Paul saying that they could lose their salvation and be damned? Some who interpret this passage in the normal way really don't have a good answer for these questions.

To answer the first question is simple. Paul says in verse 13, *I'm talking to you Gentiles*. Here in verse 22, Paul again contrasts those who fell, the Jews, versus those who were shown God's kindness, the Gentiles.

To answer the second question, the answer is, not necessarily, and frankly No! Once again, Paul is not dealing directly with being saved. He is dealing with eligibility here. It must be remembered that Paul had stated not only that Israel's hardening was not total, but also that it was not permanent. Paul uses the phrase, *if they do not persist in unbelief*. The word *persist* is the Greek word *eanme*, which means *to stay over*, or *to remain in that state*. What state? Unbelief. How were they in that state to begin with? Paul told us that God Himself had blinded or hardened them. Contrary to popular belief, they had not just simply chosen not to believe. Thus, they were rejected and excluded from participation. Like the Gentiles previously, they were now as Paul states in Ephesians 2:12, *separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world*.

It is only after God had lifted that blindness that Israel could believe. Paul states that if they did not stay over, or remain in that state of unbelief even after God lifted their blindness, then they could also participate once again in the New Covenant, for *God is able to graft them in again*. Eternal security is not the point here. However, it is doubtful that Paul is speaking strictly of being saved here, but rather, eligibility to be saved. This is cleared up by Paul in the next section.

Vss.25-27

²⁵*I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:*

*"The deliverer will come from Zion;
he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.*

²⁷*And this is my covenant with them
when I take away their sins."*

Paul tells the Gentiles that he doesn't want them to be ignorant of *this mystery*. By the word *mystery*, Paul doesn't mean something that cannot be known. Rather, he means something that could not have been known had God not revealed it. Yet, God had revealed it, and Paul wanted them to know it. What was this mystery? Paul is here concluding his thoughts about the Olive Tree, and it is here once again that Paul brings out the fact that he has been speaking of status, participation and eligibility in the New Covenant.

Here is Israel, Who had been God's chosen people. Christ came first and foremost for them. Yet, now they had overwhelmingly rejected Christ, and Christ them. How could this happen? Paul now explains further this *mystery* that he used the parable of the Olive Tree to demonstrate. Paul says that *Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of Gentiles has come in*. Thus, the purpose of Paul's illustration of the Olive Tree was to show this point. The point is not *if*, but *when* will this temporary hardening end? It has to do with status, not number.

First, Paul states that Israel's hardening was in part. This means that only part of Israel was hardened. It does NOT mean a partial hardening. He had stated in verse 7 that the remnant had believed, and *the rest were hardened*. The term partial pertains to Israel, and not to the hardening.

Second, Paul states that Israel's hardening would last until some thing, some event occurred. This event is stated here as being when *the full number of Gentiles has come in*.

That this term is translated in the NIV as *full number* is unfortunate. The term used here is the exact same word used in verse 12, *pleroma*. Though it can mean *full number*, it is better used, and I believe should be used here in this context as *full inclusion*. It has to do with status, not number. Thus, verse 25 looks back on verse 12. In verse 12, Paul speaks of the *pleroma* of Israel. Here he is contrasting that idea with the *pleroma* of the Gentiles. Notice how verse 12 is translated in various translations:

ESV

Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!

Amplified

Now if their stumbling (their lapse, their transgression) has so enriched the world [at large], and if [Israel's] failure means such riches for the Gentiles, think what an enrichment and greater advantage will follow their full reinstatement!

ISV

Now if their stumbling means riches for the world, and if their fall means riches for the gentiles, how much more will their full participation mean!

GWT

The fall of the Jewish people made the world spiritually rich. Their failure made people who are not Jewish spiritually rich. So the inclusion of Jewish people will make the world even richer.

Weymouth

And if their lapse is the enriching of the world, and their overthrow the enriching of the Gentiles, will not still greater good follow their restoration?

Thus, the pleroma of the Gentiles in verse 25 should be translated in the same way as the pleroma of Israel in verse 12. This means that Paul is not speaking of the full number of Gentiles being saved. Again, in Ephesians 2:12, Paul told the Gentiles, *remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.* He was dealing with the Gentile status there, and he is dealing with the same here. He is speaking about the fact that now, Gentiles, through Israel's fall, have now been given access to Christ, to citizenship in Israel, to the covenants of the promise, to hope, and to God. Their status has now changed from what it used to be. This does not mean that all Gentiles will be saved. It simply means that now they are eligible to receive the Gospel and its benefits.

Paul is saying that Israel and the Gentiles have traded places in relation to God. In fact, Paul does say that in the rest of the passage as follows:

Vss. 28-32

²⁸As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, ²⁹for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. ³⁰Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, ³¹so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. ³²For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

Notice Paul says that the same *they* that are enemies, are the same *they* that are loved! Paul says the Gentiles were *at one time disobedient*, but now have been granted

access to God through His mercy. In the same way, Paul says, Israel, who had God's mercy, was *now disobedient*. The Gentiles and Israel had now been swapped by God. Why would God do this? Paul says, *For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all*. By the word all, Paul means both Jews and Gentiles.

Paul is saying that God rejected Israel for a purpose beyond judgment. God's judgments are unto salvation. God rejected Israel so that the Gentiles could be saved. Through the mercy shown unto the Gentiles, now Israel could also be saved. Notice the word in verse 31 is *now*: *So they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you*. The same blinded, hardened Jews who had now become disobedient, Paul says, may now also receive mercy. The time of God's hardening was coming to an end.

Paul says that whatever event was wanting before the Jews could be saved had now begun to come to pass. That further proves that the word *pleroma* used in verse 25 means *full inclusion* and not *full number*. Paul says that through the mercy that was now being shown unto the Gentiles by God's inclusion of them in the faith, Israel would also now be reinstated and included once again in the faith. This again does not mean all Gentiles will be saved, or that all the Jews will be saved. This was what Paul had been waiting for. Remember in verse 5, Paul had said, *So too, at the present time there is also a remnant chosen by grace*. Paul says in verse 8 that God had blinded them *to this very day*. However, Paul then explains to the Gentiles that this is now about to change. The time of inclusion of the Gentiles had begun. This was a beginning, not an ending. We will address this more later. In this way, Paul is justifying his position taken in chapter 9 that God's word to Israel had not failed.

This process would be fully complete when the temple, the Old Testament age, and the animal sacrifice, i.e. God's dealing exclusively with Israel only, had come to an end. The end of one age is the beginning of another. The ending of God's dealing with one people only, is the beginning of God's dealing with all people the same. There is neither Jew nor Greek in Christ. This is why Paul, in Ephesians 2:15-16 said, *By abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility*. This is why Jesus said in John 10:16, *I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd*. In Colossians 1:20, Paul said, *And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross*.

Thus, we look at the Old Testament as Israel only, the New Testament as a transition period up until 70 AD, and after this, the full inclusion of all peoples, both Jew and Gentile. Thus, the phrase *to the Jew first, and also to the Greek*, really only applied until the inclusion of the Gentiles had begun to take place, as it is recorded in Acts 13:46, *Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to*

you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. This took full form at the destruction of the temple. Therefore, when Paul says that all Israel will be saved, we must look at that phrase as it fits into this entire context.

What becomes abundantly clear is that God's method of reaching Israel is through the Gentiles, not apart or separate from them. God does not need, nor intend to, according to Paul, remove any Gentiles before dealing with the Jews. Again, in Ephesians 2:12, Paul states adamantly that God's plan is to deal with the Jews and Gentiles at the same exact time: *By abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.* God's plan for dealing with the Jews is the Church. Why would God remove the Church to deal with Israel, when the Church IS the way in which He purposed to deal with Israel?

We're taking the long way 'round, but another scripture needs to be addressed before we tackle the phrase *all Israel*. That scripture is Luke's account of the Olivet Discourse, found in Luke 21. In Luke 21, Jesus identifies the end of the age (from Matthew's gospel), with the destruction of the temple. In verses 23-24, Jesus states the following: *How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*

Here Jesus says that this time, which we know occurred in 70 AD, would be a time of God's wrath upon *this people*. Furthermore, Jesus states that Jerusalem would be trampled, which in the Greek means *to be brought to utter ruin*, by the Gentiles *until*. Until what? *Until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*. This phrase is so similar to Paul's phrase *fullness of the Gentiles*, that every Bible scholar mentions them together. Here Jesus says that the destruction of Jerusalem, which took 3.5 years, would last until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled. Assuming that the terms mean the same thing, Jesus was saying that Jerusalem would be trampled until the full-inclusion of the Gentiles had come in. Therefore, this is a beginning of a new time, not just an ending. Contrary to some, this meant that the times of the Gentiles began in 70 AD, not ended there. By the word *fulfilled*, Jesus must mean what Paul meant when he said *be come in*, or *arrives*. In other words, Jesus said the temple would be destroyed until the *times of the Gentiles* arrives, not ends. This actually fits more accurately to the discourse itself, for Jesus had stated that *this is the beginning of birth pains*. It is the beginning, not the ending. Birth pains indicate that something is about to be born, not die. The focus is on the new arrival, not the late departure.

Here again then is the scripture:

²⁵*I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part*

until the full number (full inclusion) of the Gentiles has come in (not gone away). ²⁶And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

"The deliverer will come from Zion;

he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.

²⁷And this is my covenant with them

when I take away their sins."

The word *so* used here is the Greek word *houto*, which means *in this way, or in this manner*. Paul does not say, *and then all Israel will be saved*. He is describing the *manner* in which Israel will be saved. Now we have to take everything that Paul has said up until this point into consideration. Paul says that Israel has been rejected so that the Gentiles could have access to God and be saved. Through this event, God's intent was to make Israel jealous through the Gentiles, (which again clearly demonstrates that God is saving Israel through the Gentiles, and not apart from them). Through this jealousy, Israel could also be saved. This was God's plan. This is how God designed it. God rejected Israel by blinding them for a season, but this blinding was not total, nor permanent. Israel was to be blinded until the full inclusion of the Gentiles could take place, and then through the Gentiles, God would deal with the Jews. This means that God would deal with the Jews in the same exact manner that He would deal with all men. They are now no more blind to the Gospel than you or I were when we were lost. Thus, it is in this manner, that all Israel will be saved. In other words, Paul is speaking of Israel as a whole, not the whole of Israel. Whoever out of Israel will be saved, will be saved in this manner. That is what Paul is saying.

The use of the term *all Israel* then, is set in contrast to the part of Israel, the remnant that Paul mentioned earlier. There he stated that only part of Israel would be saved, and the rest were blinded. Here he states how the rest of Israel would be reached with the Gospel. He is saying, *in this manner*, all of Israel, (as opposed to the part), will be saved if they believe. He isn't saying every Jew WILL be saved no matter what. Nowhere here does Paul at all imply that Israel can be saved apart from believing the Gospel. That is the whole reason why God concluded all in unbelief: that He might have mercy upon all. If it came by any other way, Paul says, by heritage or status or anything else, then it would not be by grace. Jews can only be saved by grace the same as Gentiles. This is why God ended the special *favoured nation* status of Israel. He did it so that He could save them, and all men, by His grace and mercy. It was impossible to do it any other way.

Israel cannot use its kinship to Abraham, nor its being a chosen people, nor any other reason in order to deserve and claim salvation. This is the whole reason that Israel failed to obtain God's righteousness to begin with! They sought it by their own works. Paul doesn't mean they were trying to work their way into heaven. It actually means that they thought that God's righteousness was imputed to them based on who they were and their service to God. They thought that every thing that they did was righteous and holy because they were God's pals. However, this was not so. They had self-righteousness that was based on their special status. By the phrase "their works," Paul means their own self-righteousness. By removing the special status, God took away any grounds for

boasting or self-righteousness that they might present in protest to believing the Gospel. Now, they must be able to say with the apostle, *He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit* (Titus 3:5). Amen.