



SO ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED

In that day



Jim Beale, July 10, 2021

(25) For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. (26) And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: (27) For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. (28) As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. (29) For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. (Romans 11:25-29 KJV)

1. Exegesis of the text

- a. In v. 25,
 - i. Paul says that he tells us a mystery. He uses this term 17 times in his epistles, but this is the first time it appears in Romans. The only other time it appears in Romans is in Romans 16:25, in which we are given what amounts to a definition of the term. There, a mystery is defined as something “which was kept secret since the world began” but “is now made manifest.” That is, though there is revelation in the OT, it is obscure but is now made clear through the Apostolic interpretation of the OT Scriptures.
 - ii. Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. If your doctor were to say to you, you will be partially blind until your scheduled surgery in August, you would understand that you will only be able to see partially until then but after that the surgery your vision will be wholly restored.
 - iii. Thus, here Paul is setting a limit to the partial blindness after which we anticipate a full restoration of sight.
- b. In v. 26, Paul makes what comes a surprising assertion: And so, all Israel will be saved.
 - i. There are two decisions to be made here.
 - ii. First, what is meant by “Israel” – what is “all Israel”? and second when/how does this event take place? Is it of a remnant incrementally converted over the centuries or more punctiliar event of a mass of people, occurring over a short time?
 1. First, by the name “Israel”, does Paul mean the sum total of the remnant saved incrementally? “Israel” would then be consistent with that “not all Israel is Israel,” Israel, i.e., those few Jews who are saved along the way.
 2. But this is equivalent to saying that all the elect will be saved. If true Israel is defined as the subset of Israel which is elect, then saying all Israel will be saved is equivalent to saying that all the elect Jews will be saved. But the elect are exactly those who are predestined unto life. Thus, saying that all the elect will be saved is saying something obvious from the definition of the terms themselves. Of course all the elect will be saved. This is no mystery. Therefore, this idea does not satisfy the definition of “mystery” given in Romans 16:25 and so cannot be Paul’s meaning.
 3. If we take “Israel” then to mean national Israel, it is clear that it can’t mean all of national Israel for all time. Otherwise there wouldn’t be a

mere remnant at the present time. And so we conclude that Paul intends to say that “all Israel” at one given, still future, time will be converted in a single revival.

- iii. Paul references Is 59:20 and brings in the idea of the Kinsman Redeemer, the nearest kinsman to redeem the one who is reduced to desperate conditions, as in the story of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz. Christ, by virtue of His very Jewish humanity, is perfectly suited to be the Kinsman Redeemer of national Israel. Who else? Why else would we be given the idea of the kinsman redeemer?
- c. In v.27, Paul introduces another supporting verse from Jer 31, which is the description of the New Covenant. Apart from the passing mention of covenant in 9:4, this is the only reference to the covenant in the book of Romans. By bringing in the covenant at this point, in this context, with reference to national Israel only, Paul makes the future restoration of Israel to stand upon the certainty of the covenant promise of God made explicitly to Israel in Jeremiah 31, which is itself of the same cloth with the Abrahamic covenant. That is, national Israel will be saved by grace through faith as are we.
- d. In v. 28, the Apostle summarizes the on-going situation –
 - i. Israel continues as distinct from the Church, specifically as an enemy of the gospel. Nevertheless, even though the Jews have continued to be enemies of the gospel, they have also continued to be beloved for the Father’s sake.
 - ii. This is an amazing situation which, in the wisdom of God, is leading toward a specific end. For, having been enemies of the gospel and dispersed into every land, and mistreated and abused, the Jews have nevertheless been preserved for the sake of that final generation, of which the vast majority are elect.
- e. In v. 29, the passage concludes with the assertion that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. That is, the honor and integrity of God are at stake. The sovereign choice of God in choosing a people is brought to its highest revelation of glory in the maintenance and preservation of that disobedient and rebellious people through long generations of long-suffering. In this is the sovereign grace of God greatly glorified in their salvation after such a long and arduous time. Thus, this doctrine magnifies God’s glory, His covenantal faithfulness, goodness and grace beyond all measure.

2. And so, all Israel will be Saved

- a. I’ve taken as my text and thesis for today’s study Paul’s somewhat surprising assertion, revealed to us as a mystery, that all Israel will be saved.
- b. The Dutch theologian Herman Witsius wrote, “Some, perhaps, may say, are there not clearer expressions in proof of this matter in the prophets? Why then does the apostle pitch upon these, the force and cogency of which does not at first sight appear? I answer, there are such, which we shall presently produce; but here the supreme and admirable wisdom of the Holy Spirit shines forth, partly, because by selecting these, he would bring us to consider entire prophecies, which as it were, he points out to us, and of such a nature as to give full conviction of this matter. Partly, that by arguing from prophecies less evident, he might constrain us to give credit to such as are more clear and express: for, who will take upon him to wrest to a different meaning such evident testimonies, as by the very sound of their words lead to their sense, when he observes,

that Paul draws his reasons from such as seemed much more remote from the purpose? (Witsius, Herman. *The Restoration of the Jews: An Extract from Herman Witsius*, p. 10).

- c. Perhaps not too surprisingly this topic did not receive any attention during the time of the Reformation and only scant consideration in the 1700s. The Reformers were understandably focused on the fundamental doctrines of the gospel and so the time for this question had not yet come. However, the time did come and there was a veritable explosion of interest in the topic of a Jewish restoration to their homeland in the mid 1800s.
- d. In 1839, the Church of Scotland sent out an official Deputation to travel from Scotland through Europe to Egypt and then to Palestine to ascertain the state and condition of the Jews. This deputation included notable men such as Robert Murray M'Cheyne and Andrew Bonar, the brother of Horatius Bonar. Bonar wrote that, "on the part of our Church, 'the thing was done suddenly;' but it soon became evident that 'God had prepared the people.'" (Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in 1839 (p. 5). Amazingly, the possibility and interest and intention to make the missionary journey arose suddenly but everything fell smoothly into place. And so they went.
- e. There were, as is often the case in such difficult matters of interpretation, good men on both sides of the question of a general Jewish restoration and conversion. In 1861, Scottish theologian, David Brown, wrote – "that the Restoration of the Jews, from all the places of their dispersion, is predicted clearly, repeatedly, and circumstantially in Scripture, is admitted on all hands. The only question is how this is to be understood—whether literally or figuratively; and, if literally, whether of a past or of a future restoration. (David Brown; *The Restoration of the Jews: the History, Principles, and Bearings of the Question*; Kindle Locations 776-781)
- f. The hermeneutical question revolves around the spiritualization of national Israel
 - i. Those who argued against a Jewish restoration did so on the basis of the typical nature of the Jewish people. Patrick Fairbairn, author of the very helpful work, *The Typology of Scripture*, argued against a restoration saying, "the point in question is implied in the very fact of their being types; for, as such, they of necessity merged and became lost in the antitype." (Typology, I, 417).
 - ii. And – the view presented, however, of the relations of the covenant people, as connected with the occupation of Canaan, leads naturally to the conclusion, that their peculiar connection with that territory has ceased with the other temporary expedients and shadows to which it belonged. (Fairbairn, *ibid*).
 - iii. That is, according to Fairbairn, the Jewish people, like all the articles of the Old Covenant have faded away and have been replaced by the New.
 1. This begs the question – who says something cannot be both type and have an independent reality at the same time? Isn't the Sabbath both a type of the rest to come and yet a very real weekly rest? Though, the Sabbath existed before Christ and is fulfilled in Christ – we have the antitype of our Sabbath rest in Christ – yet there remains a Sabbath-keeping for the people of God (Heb 4). Why can't the Jewish people of

old be typical of the church and yet themselves still be a real, independent entity?

2. We can make all the desired concessions – that Israel is a type of the church, that there is spiritual Israel which is the same invisible church which is the continuation of that spiritual Israel, that primitive Church.
 3. All of that is granted with the whole heart yet does not bear on the question of the continued covenantal relation with national Israel. These are two separate questions and the affirmation of the spiritual does not entail the negation of the physical. Affirming that the Church is spiritual Israel does not negate God's covenant with national Israel.
- iv. Those who affirmed the restoration of Israel did so on the basis of a more literal Biblical hermeneutic. However, let's be cautious here as well. A merely wooden, literal hermeneutic such as is espoused by the dispensationalists is not the answer either. Though such a hermeneutic might give correct interpretations in some cases, there are other cases where a spiritualization of the words is intended. We dare not approach any text with preconceived notions or a rigid scheme of interpretation. We must always be humble and tremble before the Word of God.
1. We do not hold to either a consistently spiritual or literal hermeneutic.
 2. The Word of God is our hermeneutic – Scripture interprets Scripture. Scripture, as a whole, is a unified body of truth in which each individual portion fits perfectly and adds to the whole. Scripture alone is authoritative to interpret itself.
 3. There are more clear and there are less clear things in Scripture and we must always interpret the less clear by the more clear. In general, the NT is more clear and must interpret the OT, and must certainly provide the framework of our understanding as we approach the OT.
 4. We not only have the long passage in Romans 11 to guide us as to the restoration of the Jews, we have Jesus' own words in the Olivet discourse, "And they [the Jews] shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24 KJV). In this one amazing utterance, Jesus predicted not only the fall of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews but also their regathering and the restoration of Jerusalem to them.
 5. I suppose it is worth pointing out that history has decisively settled this hermenetical question when, in 1948, against all human wisdom and natural expectation, the Jews were restored to their homeland. And so, what Edward Bickersteth wrote in 1841 is seen to be very wise, that "the begun restoration of Israel may in a short time be a fact instead of a prophecy, and decide by a fulfilment the true principle of interpretation of prophecy" (Edward Bickersteth. The restoration of the Jews to their own land: in connection with their future conversion and the final blessedness of our Earth, Kindle Locations 44-46).

6. One final general point. All writers intimately connect the restoration to the land with the general conversion. Though there has been considerable disagreement as to the order of their reconciliation to God and their restoration to the land, with some arguing for conversion before restoration and others for the reverse, all agree that the two are inseparable – where there is the one, the other must necessarily occur at some point
 - a. The Scriptures themselves make this connection explicit as David Brown wrote, “the connection uniformly held forth in Scripture, in the case of the Jews, between Defection and Dispersion, and between Reconciliation and restoration, constitutes strong ground for expecting that their final Conversion will be accompanied by a final Restoration to their fatherland. (Kindle Locations 1986-1993).
 - i. As their loss of the land was tied to unbelief, so their restoration to the land implies belief – whether before or at some future point. This is amazing grace!!
 - b. The point that I want to stress is that the case is already half made – the accomplishment of the restoration of national Israel to their land ought to be seen as a guarantee of the future national conversion and reconciliation.
 - c. If Origen Bachelier could write in 1843, “it were an impeachment of Divine Wisdom, to suppose that their identity has thus been preserved to no purpose, and that they will continue as they are till the end of the world, or at length amalgamate with other nations, and entirely disappear” – that is, seeing that the wisdom of God had seen fit to graciously preserve the Jewish people among the nations such that we should expect their restoration to the homeland, how much more, now that they are restored to their homeland, should we anticipate their general conversion on the same wisdom and goodness of God?
 - d. The two, as we will see, are intimately connected in Scripture.

g. Abrahamic covenant

- i. In Romans 11:29, where we read that “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance,” our minds are drawn to the call of Abraham and the covenant made with him as the ground of the election of Israel.
- ii. In Genesis 12, we have an account of the call of Abram, and of some of the promises made to him, by the Lord, as follows: “Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy fathers house, -unto a land that I will shew thee...” In verse 7, it says: “And the Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, unto thy seed will I give this land.” We find by the foregoing, that the literal land of Canaan was promised to Abraham's literal seed. That the literal seed is here intended, appears from its being the

literal Canaan that was promised, and also from the other promise, that God would make of him a great nation.

- iii. The four senses of the seed
 1. Singular
 - a. Isaac – the immediate, typical of Christ
 - b. Christ – the True I
 2. Plural
 - a. National Israel – the Jewish people
 - b. Spiritual Israel – includes Jews and Gentiles in Christ
 3. We must carefully distinguish between these things. As one man wrote, “You may prove that there is a spiritual seed, to whom spiritual promises are made, which we readily admit; but that does not prove that there is not a literal seed, to whom literal promises are made: that does not prove that the Jews are not to be wholesale converted, and restored to the land of Canaan.” (Origen Bachelier. Restoration and Conversion of the Jews (Kindle Locations 1114-1118)).

And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. (Genesis 13:14-15 KJV)

- iv. Here all will admit, that the literal descendants of Abraham and the literal land of Canaan are to be understood. Now God himself calls these literal descendants, in this passage, the seed of Abraham, and expressly says, that he had promised this literal Canaan to them forever. What though they were not that spiritual seed through faith mentioned in some other parts of Scripture, to whom spiritual promises are made? Does that nullify the promise made? What if they were disobedient? Shall their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? God forbid. For there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. (Romans 11:26)

h. Lev 26

And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the LORD their God. (Leviticus 26:44 KJV)

- i. The long section from verse 14 through to the end lists the curses to come upon the people because of their continued walking contrary to the Lord.
- ii. The prophecy is given that they will be dispersed into the lands of their enemies. In verse 43, we read -- The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them.” The land will be left empty and the cities desolate
- iii. Four times in this passage the threat is made of a seven-fold punishment. In a temporal sense, to be punished seven times speaks of a long time period. But, in spite of the sevenfold multiplication and extension of the punishment, yet the Lord said that He would not break His covenant with them.

- iv. And in verse 45, God reaffirms His covenantal faithfulness. “But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the LORD.” Thus, at stake in this question is the sovereignty and character of God. The LORD is a God of absolute covenantal faithfulness -- He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. But we must be sure to think His thoughts after Him by properly understanding the Scriptures and so come to trust and fear His goodness.

i. Isaiah 11:11-12

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. (Isaiah 11:10-12 KJV)

- i. Many authors on this subject think that this text is alone sufficient to establish the point because it is so clear.
- ii. The specific term “that day” is eschatological – that is, it is speaking of the last days, the times of the gospel appears 45 times in the book of Isaiah. It occurs twice in Isaiah 11, in the two transitional verses 10 & 11 which in the Hebrew are two lines of prose inserted into the middle of two section of poetry. Verse 10 ties back to verse 1 with the reference of the root of Jesse and v. 11 begins the new section.
 - 1. The “that day” of v. 10, is the time when Christ stands as an ensign of the people to whom the Gentiles seek. His rest is glorious.
 - 2. The “that day” of v. 11 is therefore in the same time period, during the time of the Gentiles.
- iii. The text says that this will be the second time the Jews were recovered to their land. The remnant was first recovered from Babylon, which was yet future to the time of Isaiah. That recovery was not a global recovery as is here expressed. The lands expressed in v. 11 are north, south, east, west, far north and the islands of the sea. In v. 12, this is explicitly stated to be “from the four corners of the earth.”

j. Jeremiah 31:35-40

Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, [and] the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts [is] his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, [then] the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the

dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, [shall be] holy unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever. (Jeremiah 31:35-40 KJV)

- i. This portion is immediately following the promise of the New Covenant, which Paul references in Romans 11:27, as being explicitly made to Israel and not to be taken to the exclusion of national Israel. This promise is a guarantee that such an event will occur.
- ii. Here is a beautiful expression of God's covenantal faithfulness. It is expressed in a poetic syllogism: if the sun and stars were to cease to shine, then national Israel will cease to be a nation and will be cast off. This love is an unconditional love. It is the love of the Sovereign God who governs the sun and stars. It is by His great power that not one goes missing and it is in His power to set His love upon a people of His own choosing for His great name's sake. It is the love of Him whose glory it is to forgive sin because He delights in mercy. His steadfast love is sovereign – it elects, sustains, supplies, and applies His grace in due season.
- iii. The restoration in view is a permanent restoration and thus could not have been anytime before 70 AD because it says in verse 40 that it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more. Since all of Jerusalem was reduced to rubble in 70 AD, this prophecy cannot have been fulfilled by the return from the Babylonian exile.

k. Amos 9:11-15

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: ... And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit [them]; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God. (Amos 9:11, 14-15 KJV)

- i. The mention of this passage by James in Acts 15:16-17 is for the purpose of showing that the Gentiles will be brought in, which does not negate the sense of the restoration of Israel in the latter days but rather confirms it because it applies the literal rendering of the text regarding the Gentiles being brought in, therefore what remains is spoken of national Israel.
- ii. Notice that it is the captivity of the people of Israel which is being dealt with in the text. It is "my people of Israel" who will be brought again to rebuild the waste cities and to inhabit them.
- iii. Also note the very wonderful closing words of the book of Amos, "the LORD thy God."
- iv. This cannot be related to the restoration from the Babylonian exile because that was not Israel, that is, the tribes of the northern kingdom which were restored but Judah.
- v. Second, it cannot be related to the Babylonian captivity because the text says they will no more be pulled up out of their land. But the utter destruction of 70

AD followed the Babylonian restoration in which the Jews were altogether pulled up out of their land.

- vi. Alex Motyer commented on this passage, “The land is theirs forever. This is not typology. It is one of the facts of OT history that the inheritance is lost by sin. But if they cannot lose the land forever, then the penalty of sin has been lifted...” That is, the land restoration is intimately bound up with the reconciliation. The eternal promise of the land thus presupposes not only the removal of sin but a general salvation of the people, at some point.

I. Ezekiel 36

Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD: (Ezekiel 36:1 KJV)

- i. In the first section of this chapter, the LORD commands the prophet to prophesy to the mountains of Israel. This is the Word of God – the prophet is commanded to address the land, which is addressed because there are no people. The prophet addresses “the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that are round about” (v. 4).
- ii. God is jealous for the land! He speaks against the heathen who have had possession of the land during the long absence of the people. “Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession” (v.2). God says of the land, “Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen” (v.6).

But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. (Ezekiel 36:8)

- iii. In the second section, God ceases His lament about the land being trampled underfoot by the heathen and introduces the topic of the return of the people. Still speaking to the land, “For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded” (v. 9,10)

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. (Ezekiel 36:16-17 KJV)

- iv. In vv. 19-21, the Lord gives a retrospective of what occasioned the barrenness of the land. God scattered them among the heathen, dispersed them through the countries. (v. 19) Why were the waste places desolate and the cities forsaken? The Lord says it was because He scattered the inhabitants of the land among the nations. He scattered them because He judged them according to their doings.
- v. In vv. 21-24, the Lord gives the motivation for the restoration of the people to the land. Please note that the text does not say that God would restore them

because they deserved it. It doesn't say that they would repent and then be restored to the land. What is the reason given?

1. I had pity for mine holy name (v. 21)
 2. I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake (v. 22)
 3. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. (v.23)
- vi. What then is the order given in this passage?
1. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. (v.24)
 2. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you (v.25)
 3. A new heart also will I give you (v. 26)
 4. And I will put my spirit within you (v.27)

m. Ezekiel 37

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. ... So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. (Ezekiel 37:1-2, 10 KJV)

- i. This portion immediately following chapter 36 is in the same context as the ultimate restoration of the people to the land. Note that the bones were said to be not only "very many" but "very dry." The dryness of the bones speaks of a great age, or following a very long time, as bones dry slowly.
 1. The vision of dry bones is one of death – of many dead bodies left for ages such that nothing is left but the bones and those are very dry.
 2. The idea is spiritual – the bones represent the deadness of the whole house of Israel.
- ii. The prophet speaks to the wind and the wind brings all the dry bones in the valley to life.
 1. This is not a minor restoration! It is from the driest of bones to life.
 2. This is not a partial restoration! It is the whole valley full of dry bones which is brought to life. We are not told of any bones which remained – an exceeding great army (v.10).

Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. (Ezekiel 37:11-12 KJV)

- iii. The bones are specifically identified with the whole house of Israel. The whole house of Israel goes beyond the restoration of the Babylonian exile, from which returned Judah and Benjamin only – compare Ezra 1:5.

- iv. Here not only the two tribes of the Babylonian captivity are in view but, as it says, the whole house of Israel – including the so-called “ten lost tribes” which were never lost to God.
- v. The idea isn’t regeneration in the individual sense of being born again but it is metaphorical of the resurrection of national Israel. That is, the nation consisted of Jews scattered in bondage throughout the earth. During WWII, the Jews were the offscouring of the earth, shamefully treated – gathered up, transferred to ghettos and concentration camps and sent to the gas chambers. This was 1944. Then, within four years Israel was reborn as a nation. And, beginning in 1948, a mass migration of Jews from the four corners of the world took place – starting with survivors of the Holocaust and then from countries throughout the world.

The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and [for] all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. (Ezekiel 37:12, 15-17 KJV)

- vi. This passage teaches that the people who are brought back to the land will not be distinguishable into tribes. The joining of the two sticks means that there is one stick, and no difference among the tribes. God said, “I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel” (v.22).
- vii. This can’t be speaking of the time of the Messiah, following the first restoration to the land because at that time there was genealogical information. Jesus was of the tribe of Judah with complete genealogy being given, Anna the prophetess was of the tribe of Asher (Luke 2:36), Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin.

n. Zechariah 12:10

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for [his] only [son], and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for [his] firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. (Zechariah 12:10-11 KJV)

- i. The future conversion of the Jews is to flow from an extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit as we read that God will pour out upon the house of David the Holy Spirit.
- ii. This verse is intimately linked with the crucifixion by John 19:37, “And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.” But the context of Zechariah 12 is of a final battle of Jerusalem in which the Lord will defend Jerusalem. “And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem” (v.9). That did not happen in 70AD. There, the prophesied destruction took place. Here is a prophecy of the latter days when Jerusalem will again be surrounded by armies. This time, though, the Lord will glorify Himself by defending Jerusalem. Compare Ezekiel 38 & 39.

- iii. The great mourning that is mentioned has not occurred yet. Though this prophecy is rooted and grounded in the crucifixion, the fulfillment awaits the return of Christ. The identity of the same people is presupposed without question – the unity of the people means that the same people who pierced Him at the crucifixion will see Him at His return.
- iv. Imagine the grace of the Lord – to receive an entire generation of Jews in a mass revival.
- v. Imagine the grief of the people – all Jews who had rejected Jesus as their Messiah generation after generation – to be regenerated and confronted with the love of this one. Truly they “shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days” (Hosea 3:5). As Joseph wept to reveal Himself to His brothers, it is hard to imagine the weeping and fear of the great goodness of the Lord for having preserved them so many generations of unbelief.

3. What is the proper response to all this?

- a. Awe at the wisdom and providence of God
 - i. To discern this way of having the Gentiles come in due to the stumbling of the Jews until such time as the fulness of the Gentiles be brought in. Thus, when the Gentiles fall away (2 Thess 2:3) the conversion of the Jews will be as life from the dead.
 - ii. To have preserved the Jewish people during nearly 1900 years of exile is astonishing. Then, to have brought the nation back into existence in accordance with a precise timeline is glorious beyond comprehension. This act of God is so clear and present that it deserves much more notice and attention to the praise of His great power, goodness, mercy and steadfast love. I’ve never heard anyone pray a note of praise to God for the preservation and restoration of the Jewish people in accordance with His great providence.
 - iii. It is ironic that during the mid-1800s, there was such a keen interest in this question that news of the restoration would have thrilled their souls. Now that it has happened, a glorious fulfillment of Scripture in our own day, there seems to be very little interest in the significance of the events.
- b. Humility
 - i. The great divide over this question should teach us hermeneutics of humility. We must be extremely careful to interpret Scripture by Scripture correctly and not to mix spiritual and literal seeds and the separate promises made to them just because we might not see the whole picture.
 - ii. The great stumbling-block for the Gentile churches meet in connection with the restoration of Israel is the certain fact of our apostasy and the coming judgments against the church. This is so contrary to all our wishes and hopes, and so humbling to our pride and self-sufficiency, [...] (Edward Bickersteth. The restoration of the Jews to their own land: in connection with their future conversion and the final blessedness of our Earth, Kindle Locations 1489-1492).
- c. Watchfulness
 - i. The restoration of Israel may soon in its first stage become a fact; but the great instruction which it is designed to give the world is that it is an ensign to all the

inhabitants of the earth of the return of the Lord. Isaiah xviii. 3. Matt. xxiv. 30. The signs of the times then respecting the Jews call us to special watchfulness here. (Edward Bickersteth. The restoration of the Jews to their own land: in connection with their future conversion and the final blessedness of our Earth, Kindle Locations 2391-2394)

- ii. But not only have we to watch against errors, and temptations, and sins, but to watch for every opportunity of glorifying God and benefiting men, seizing promptly each occasion of doing good. And, above all, we have to watch and wait for the coming of the Redeemer,— Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. Happy those wise Christians to whom this is a blessed hope, for which they are looking, to whom he comes as the expected Bridegroom, and then they enter with him to the marriage. (Edward Bickersteth, Kindle Locations 10633-10638).

d. Thankfulness

- i. Christ comes to the worst. Bunyan wrote a little book called “The Jerusalem Sinner” in which he elevates the goodness of God in saving the worst of sinners, which he terms the “Jerusalem Sinner.” He wrote, “Thus it was with the people concerned in the text, they were the worst of sinners, Jerusalem sinners, sinners of the biggest size, and therefore such as had the greatest need: Wherefore they must have mercy offered to them, before it be offered any where else in the world. “Begin at Jerusalem,” offer mercy first to a Jerusalem sinner: This man has most need; he is farthest from God, nearest to hell, and so one that has most need. (John Bunyan. The Jerusalem Sinner Saved)
- ii. The Lord’s goodness is overwhelming – “the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before” (Job 42:10). Though he afflicts, He will restore -- he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up (Hosea 6:1).

e. Diligence In Seeking To Save Souls.

- i. The words of our Saviour should especially now be our purpose and guide day by day. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. Soon the present opportunities of spreading divine truth, freedom and liberty of action, and means of reaching all quarters of the earth, as far as regards the exertions of the children of God, may be greatly impeded or wholly taken from us. Soon we may be despoiled of the many advantages we now have for doing good to the bodies and souls of men, but if we now scatter the seed it may be brought in, even in those days, and ultimately bring a glorious harvest, in which we shall for ever rejoice. He that winneth souls is wise. Let this be the wisdom which we choose and prefer... (Edward Bickersteth, Kindle Locations 10646-10651).