

The Gospel of the Kingdom

By Philip Mauro

Chapter Fifteen

SO ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED

In my comments on the words, "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11:25) I pointed out that, notwithstanding that the passage in which those words occur is plainly a prophecy of the state in which the Jewish people were to exist throughout *this present age*, and that it says nothing whatever as to their state thereafter, it is now commonly interpreted as predicting that, in a future "dispensation," the whole nation is to be healed of its spiritual blindness. The next words of the passage are these:

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, there shall come our of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins.

As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." (Rom. 11:26-28).

This passage likewise has been very badly treated in the interest of the new *Dispensationalism*. And, like as the preceding passage has been transmuted from a prophecy strictly limited to this age into one relating wholly to a future age, so this passage also is lifted bodily out of the age where the Spirit of God has placed it, and is transported to a future age, an age which exists only in the imagination of men. For the passage is usually interpreted precisely as if it read, "And *then* all Israel shall be saved," instead of "And *so* all Israel shall be saved."

Indeed all that is needed for the correction of this gigantic "dispensational" error is first to note the significance of that little word "so," and then to ascertain its meaning from the context, which is easily done.

The adverb "so" answers to the question "*How?*" It says *nothing at all in answer to the question "When?"* Yet my experience has been that, whenever Romans 11:26 is cited by dispensationalists, it is presented as proof that the entire Jewish race, reconstituted into an earthly nation, is to be saved *in a future "dispensation."* In fact, however, the passage teaches the very opposite; namely: that the phrase "all Israel" means, not the entire Jewish race of a future age, but the entire body of the redeemed of *this gospel age*. The word "so" occurs in the concluding part of the passage and hence necessarily refers back to the preceding verses, where the apostle, after explaining *who* they are that constitute God's

true "Israel," tells in detail, and illustrates by the figure of the "good olive tree," just *how* God's Israel was to "be saved." He there describes beforehand precisely what God has been doing from that day to this; and when he finished his description, and has illustrated it with marvellous clearness by the figure of the olive tree, he brings the matter to a conclusion by saying: "And *so*"--that is, *in the manner he had been describing*--"all Israel shall be saved." And he adds that the saving of "all Israel" in that manner would fulfil certain Old Testament prophecies, which he quotes.

If therefore we simply ascertain from the preceding verses (as can be done with little trouble and with certainty) *who* are the "all Israel" of God's purpose, and *how* they were to "be saved," we shall also ascertain in the process *when* they were to be saved.

WHO ARE THE "ALL ISRAEL" OF ROM. 11:26?

The "all Israel" of Rom. 11:26 is *the whole body of God's redeemed people*. It is composed of "*the election*" (which, as we have seen, has "obtained" what the natural Israel as a whole had "not obtained") with the addition thereto of *believers from among the Gentiles*. For the main purpose of this passage (Rom. IX-XI) and that also of chapter IV, and likewise of Galatians (chapters III and IV) is to make known that *the real "Israel," the true "children of Abraham," who inherit the promises of God, are not the natural seed of Abraham but his spiritual seed*.

Paul proves his doctrine, and at the same time exhibits the great difference between Abraham's natural seed and his spiritual, by citing the historical fact that "Abraham had TWO sons" (Gal. 4:22); and from the Old Testament records of the very different things that befell Ishmael and Isaac respectively, Paul deduces the great difference, in the purposes of God, between the unbelieving mass of the Israelitish people (answering to the son of the bondwoman) and the believing "remnant" (answering to the son of the free-woman). For those things, the apostle tells us, "are an allegory," the meaning of which he proceeds to explain (Gal. 4:21-31).

Abraham's elder son, Ishmael, represents the natural Israel, those "born after the flesh." Ishmael had the first-born's place in Abraham's house for a number of years before Isaac, who was to be the true and sole heir, was born. And during all that time, which answers to the period from Sinai to Pentecost--that is the era of the old covenant--Ishmael was the *heir apparent* of all that Abraham had. Moreover, even after Isaac appeared upon the scene, Ishmael continued *for a time* in occupation of the premises, and took advantage of his position to persecute the true heir. The period when Ishmael and Isaac were both under one roof and the former still had the status of a son and heir of Abraham, *answers to the time from Pentecost to the destruction of Jerusalem*. For during that period the natural Israel, "the son of the bondwoman," still occupied the holy land and city, and "persecuted" the true Israel (Gal. 4:29; 1 Thess. 2:15).

But that era of the overlapping of "the two covenants" was of short duration. For "what saith the Scripture? *Cast out the bond woman and her son:* for the son of the bond

woman *shall not be heir with the son of the free woman*" (Gal. 4:30). And the next verse gives us the application of the incident: "So then, brethren, we are not the children of the bond woman, but of the free."

The meaning of the words, "*shall not be heir*," is free from all uncertainty. Those words mean that the promises of God to Abraham are *all for his spiritual* seed. And this, moreover, is precisely what the apostle had already said in plain language: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are *the children of Abraham*" (3:7). "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (3:29). The same truth is plainly taught in Romans 4:13-16.

Coming now to Romans IX-XI, it is the plain teaching of that passage (1) that God's true "Israel," the nation concerning which it is said, "And so *all Israel* shall be saved," *is the whole body of the redeemed of the Lord*: and (2) that, that body is composed of the believing "remnant" of the natural Israel (the "remnant according to the election of grace," Ch. 11:5) with the addition thereto of believing Gentiles. Those two elements, so diverse and antagonistic by nature, are incorporated into a *spiritual unity*, "the unity of the Spirit" (Eph. 2:12-18, 4:3). And this is according to that "mystery" of God's eternal purpose, which was not clearly revealed in ages past, but now is made fully known (Eph. 3:4-6). That "mystery" is what is graphically illustrated by the olive tree of Romans XI. And as regards the salvation of the natural Israel in a future era, so far from teaching *that* doctrine, the passage we are studying was written for the purpose of refuting it. This will very clearly appear in what follows.

This section of the Epistle begins with the declaration of a fact which caused the apostle great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart, namely, that "they are *not all Israel* which are *of Israel*" (9:6). Observe here the phrase, "*all Israel*," concerning which we are now inquiring. And observe further that what we here are told is, not what it includes, but what it does *not* include. The "all Israel" of this passage *does not embrace all who are Israelites*. Paul is here speaking of his "kinsmen according to the flesh, who are *Israelites*" (ver. 3, 4). And what caused him such acute anguish of mind was the fact, revealed to him by the Spirit of God, that not all these, but indeed only a few of them, were to be included in the "all Israel" of God's purposes. It is simply impossible that Paul could have penned those words of poignant grief; it is impossible, I say, that he could have wished himself "accursed from Christ" for the sake of his "kinsmen according to the flesh" if he had held and was about to declare the doctrine now frequently attributed to him, namely, that all the Israelites in the world were to be saved at the second coming of Christ--an event the Christians of that day regarded as imminent. That doctrine, which was the very corner stone of the Judaism of that day, Paul had cast aside; and it was moreover an important part of his ministry to expose the falsity of it.

The next two verses (Rom. 9, 7, 8) make the matter still clearer. There we read:

"Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all *children*: but '*in Isaac shall thy seed be called*.' That is, they which are the children of the flesh, *these are no; the children of God*: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

This calls for no explanation; for it is the Spirit's own explanation. We need only to observe that the reason why the truth here stated caused the apostle such acute distress was that it so rigidly excludes from God's salvation all the natural descendants of Abraham except the few who were of the faith of Abraham (Rom. 4:13-16) that is, those who believed the gospel.

The apostle then proceeds to make known that it had been God's plan and purpose from the beginning to save--not all the natural descendants of Abraham, but--only such as He should *choose*. And here we have the doctrine of "election" (Rom. 9:10-26) which takes its name from the fact that God makes an "election" or choice, from among Jews and Gentiles, of those He will save and have eternally as His own people. This principle of God's *sovereign choice* is *illustrated by the case of Esau and Jacob* (vv. 10-13) where His choice was made *before the children were born*.

In the closing verses of chapter IX (27-33) Paul returns to the matter that was causing him such acute sorrow, namely that, as Isaiah had prophesied, "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a *remnant* (only) *shall be saved*." That remnant is the Jewish part of "the election"; and thus we have a clear light upon verse 26 of Chapter XI; for the words "a remnant shall *be saved*," explain the words, "all Israel shall *be saved*."

In chapter X the apostle, after expressing the desire of his heart and his prayer to God for Israel "*that they might be saved*," goes on to show that none *can* "be saved" except by believing the gospel ("the word of faith which we preach," v. 8); and that in respect to this vital matter there is "*no difference between the Jew and the Greek*. For *whosoever* shall call on the Name of the Lord shall *be saved*." And the chapter closes with a strong intimation that the Israelitish nation as a whole would not be saved; the word of Jehovah to that nation being, "All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (v. 21).

Special heed should be given to the first part of chapter XI. It shows that God's rejection of Israel nationally does not warrant the conclusion that God has cast away His people. For, as we have already seen, God's part of the nation, that is, *the election*, He did not then cast away, and never will. Hence, in bestowing upon "the election" what had been promised to "Israel," God was fulfilling His promises strictly in accordance with their true intent. The result is that "*Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded*" (11:7).

Seeing therefore that "the election," by believing the gospel of Christ, has obtained (and certainly will never be deprived of) that which God had promised to "Israel," it is clear that "the remnant according to the election of grace," with believers from among the Gentiles added, *is the "Israel" of the prophetic Scriptures*. Indeed it is evident, upon an impartial study of the entire passage, that its main purpose is to make known that very fact.

And this purpose stands forth in the clearest light in the figure of the *olive tree*, whereby the apostle, at the end of the passage, illustrates the truth he has been expounding. That olive tree represents "the Israel of God," "the election," the "one body" of the redeemed. *Not* all who are *of* Israel are in it. On the contrary, many of the natural branches, "because of unbelief *were broken off*" (v. 20). And on the other hand, many believing Gentiles *are* included; these being the branches of "the olive tree which is wild by nature, which branches have been "grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree." This is the fulfilment of all God's purposes and promises, the final outcome of all His dealings in grace with both Jews and Gentiles.

And now, in seeking an answer to the question, *Who* are the *all Israel* that are to be saved? We have found also the answer to the other question. *How* shall they be saved? For, as we have seen, the passage teaches in the plainest way that they are to be saved *by believing in Jesus Christ*. And in so teaching, it simply affirms the foundation truth of the Gospel, namely, that there is *no other way of salvation*; for "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). The natural branches of the olive tree were broken off "because of unbelief," and any of them that are saved, must be saved by personal and individual faith; for there is *no other way*.

Furthermore, in saying that "God is able to graft them in again," and that He will do so "if they abide not still in unbelief" (v. 23), the passage bears a clear witness to the truth that there is *no other salvation for them but that which the olive tree represents*. This verse alone forbids the idea that there is, or can be, a *national* salvation for the Jewish race in some future era. God, in His great forbearance and long suffering (II Pet. 3:9, 15) still keeps open to them the door of salvation, so that *individual* Israelites, by *personal faith* in Jesus Christ, may enter in and be saved. But when He rises up and shuts that door, then they who begin to seek Him for salvation will hear Him say, "I know you not; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity," and it was *to Jews* He said this (Luke 13:25, 27).

Furthermore the word "So," in Romans 11:26, meaning *in the manner* described above and illustrated by the figure of the olive tree, plainly answers the question, *How* all Israel is to be saved. They will "all be saved" precisely "SO," and not otherwise.

And finally we have found also, in what has been set forth above, the answer to the question, "*When* shall they be saved?" For, seeing that all Israel shall be saved *so*--that is, by means of "the word of faith" which the apostles preached, then most certainly they must be saved *ere this day of gospel-salvation comes to an end*. And this is plainly declared in other Scriptures, as has been shown above.

*This is an excerpt from *The Gospel of the Kingdom* written by Philip Mauro in 1927