

**Notes on the Greek New Testament**  
**Day 209 – July 28<sup>th</sup> – Romans 11:13-36**

**Works frequently referenced in these notes on Romans**

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**Verse 13**

Ἰμὶν δὲ λέγω τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. ἐφ' ὅσον μὲν οὖν εἰμι ἐγὼ ἐθνῶν ἀπόστολος, τὴν διακονίαν μου δοξάζω,

This part of the letter is intended to warn Gentile Christians against a sense of superiority.

ὅσος, ἡ, as much as, how much; ἐφ' ὅσον inasmuch as, while  
 διακονία, ας f ministry, service, contribution, help  
 δοξάζω praise, honour, glorify, exalt

**Verse 14**

εἴ πως παραζηλώσω μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ σῶσω τινὰς ἐξ αὐτῶν.

εἴ πως if by any means, if by some means  
 παραζηλωσ make jealous  
 σαρξ, σαρκοσ f flesh, physical body, human nature  
 σωζω save, rescue, heal

Paul makes it clear that his ministry to the Gentiles does not mean he lacks concern for his own people. "He was taking to the Gentiles the news that Israel's God, Abraham's God, was welcoming them into the one family now reconstituted around the Messiah (4:1-25). And he was seeking to hold this up before his fellow Jews so as to make them see what was happening and, becoming jealous, long to have a share in the eschatological blessings themselves." Wright.

**Verse 15**

εἰ γὰρ ἡ ἀποβολὴ αὐτῶν καταλλαγὴ κόσμου, τίς ἢ πρόσλημψις εἰ μὴ ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν;

ἀποβολή, ης f loss, rejection  
 καταλλαγῆ, ης f reconciliation, being put into fellowship with God  
 πρόσλημψις, εως f acceptance

Black argues that ἀποβολή and πρόσλημψις are technical terms in Rabbinic Judaism for God's rejection and acceptance of men. πρόσλημψις occurs here alone in the NT. Wright says that it must "be explained in terms of vv. 12 and 14. If, after all that has happened, Jews come back into the family, hearing and believing the gospel as in 10:6-13, then, says Paul, the significance of this will be like a kind of resurrection."

ζωή, ης f life  
 νεκρός, α, ον dead

ζωή ἐκ νεκρῶν Murray views as a reference to revival. Moo suggests that the reference may have apocalyptic overtones, associating the conversion of the Jews with the resurrection of the dead, "the last and climatic stage in God's plan for salvation." Wright argues that this is to read Paul's words outside the train of his thought in this chapter. "The 'now' of 11:31 strongly suggests that Paul is not postponing this hoped-for salvation to some distant future."

**Verse 16**

εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀπαρχὴ ἁγία, καὶ τὸ φύραμα· καὶ εἰ ἡ ρίζα ἁγία, καὶ οἱ κλάδοι.

ἀπαρχῆ, ης f firstfruit, first portion (set apart to God)

What is this firstfruit? There are three views:  
 i) Christ;  
 ii) Present Jewish believers;  
 iii) The patriarchs.

Wright argues that the 'firstfruits' and the 'root' are not necessarily the same. "The argument so far, and some of Paul's other uses of the same image, would lead us to assume that the 'first fruits' refers to the 'remnant' chosen by grace, including Paul himself (see particularly 16:5; 1 Cor 16:15; 2 Thess 2:13)." 'Holy' here does not mean 'automatically saved', but, as in 1 Cor 7:14, to be regarded as 'holy by extension', not to be despised.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, consecrated, set apart  
to/by God; οἱ ἅγιοι God's people  
φυραμα, τος n lump  
ρίζα, ης f root, source

Moo suggests that the 'root' is the patriarchs and that therefore the 'firstfruits' probably refers to the patriarchs also. "God's promise to the patriarchs has not been revoked, their descendants remain 'holy.' By this Paul does not mean that all their descendants will be saved. Rather, 'holy' (ἅγιος), as in the Old Testament and 1 Corinthians 7:14, means that the people continue to be 'set apart' by God for special attention. This continuing special relationship between God and Israel gives reason to hope for a future spiritual renewal of the people – a hope Paul spells out in verses 23-24."

Wright takes 'root' to be the Messiah. "The olive tree in the illustration [to come] is Israel, the true seed of Abraham, into which wild branches have been grafted but into which, far more easily, natural branches can be regrafted. And the crowning privilege of Israel, the human and historical focus of the nation's long story as God's people, is the Messiah (9:5). It is considerably easier, I think, to see the 'root' that 'bears' both Gentile and Jewish Christians (11:18) as the Messiah than as the patriarchs."

κλαδος, ου m branch

### 11:11-16 – Conclusion

"We conclude that 11:11-16 begins the argument that God still wants and intends to save more Jews by lining up Israel according to the flesh with both Adam and the Messiah, as the argument of chaps. 5-8 might have prepared us for. Israel has acted out both the trespass of Adam and the redemptive 'casting away' of the Messiah. Within this Paul addresses a warning to the Gentile Christians in Rome: even the Gentile mission in which he exults has this as its oblique purpose, to bring more Jews to faith and so to salvation. For Jews to embrace the gospel now, after all they have gone through, would be like resurrection from the dead. They are, after all, the relatives according to the flesh not only of the existing remnant, but of the Messiah himself." Wright.

### Verses 17-24

Paul is well aware that in this extended picture he is portraying something that is 'against nature' (v. 24). It is improper to accuse him of ignorance of agricultural practice. "He intends us to understand that what God has done with the olive tree is a miracle of grace, not the sort of thing that people do all the time." Wright.

### Verse 17

Εἰ δὲ τινες τῶν κλάδων ἐξεκλάσθησαν, σὺ δὲ ἀγριέλαιος ὢν ἐνεκεντρίσθης ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ συγκοινωνὸς τῆς ρίζης τῆς πιότητος τῆς ἐλαίας ἐγένου,

κλαδος see v.16

ἐξεκλάσθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl

ἐκκλαω break off

ἀγριέλαιος, ου f wild olive tree

ἐνεκεντρίσθης Verb, aor pass indic, 2 s

ἐγκεντριζω graft (of branches)

συγκοινωνος, ου m sharer, participant

ρίζα see v.16

πιότης, ητος f richness (of plants)

Many mss read τῆς ρίζης καὶ τῆς πιότητος but Metzger argues for the more difficult τῆς ρίζης τῆς πιότητος supported by  $\kappa^*$  B C  $\Psi$

ἐλαία, ας f olive tree

For the olive tree as a symbol of Israel, see Jer 11:16,17. Paul uses this picture for the 'true' Israel – the 'Israel of God.' "The olive tree in the illustration clearly stands for the people of God, the people stretching back to Abraham and now including both Gentiles and Jews (the main OT reference is Jer 11:16-17: Israel as an olive tree whose branches are broken off in judgment; see also Ps 52:8; Hos 14:6). The Messiah (most probably) is the 'root' through whom the tree now gets its life (v. 17), the one who holds the whole thing in place, enabling Gentile members to gain life (v. 18)." Wright.

ἐγένου Verb, aor midd dep indic, 2 s γινομαι

### Verse 18

μὴ κατακαυχῶ τῶν κλάδων· εἰ δὲ κατακαυχᾶσαι, οὐ σὺ τὴν ρίζαν βαστάζεις ἀλλὰ ἡ ρίζα σέ.

κατακαυχῶ Verb, pres midd/pass imperat, 2 s

κατακαυχαομαι boast against, despise, be proud, triumph over

Cf. 3:27-30.

βασταζω carry, bear, tolerate

Christian Gentiles are grafted into Israel. Hence the Gentiles are not to boast in the cutting off of Israel or to think of themselves as superior to the Jews. "The context reveals that the Gentiles were guilty of an arrogance toward Jews in general that extended to both Old Testament Israel and to Jewish Christians as well." Moo.

Paul's use of the second person singular throughout vv 17-24 emphasises his point.

### Verse 19

ἐρεῖς οὖν· Ἐξεκλάσθησαν κλάδοι ἵνα ἐγὼ ἐγκεντρίσθῶ.

ἐρεῖς Verb, fut act indic, 2 s λεγω

ἐγκεντρισθῶ Verb, aor pass subj, 1 s  
ἐγκεντριζῶ see v.17

### Verse 20

καλῶς· τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ ἐξεκλάσθησαν, σὺ δὲ τῇ  
πίστει ἔστηκας. μὴ ὑψηλὰ φρόνει, ἀλλὰ  
φοβοῦ·

ἀπιστία, ας f unbelief, unfaithfulness  
πίστει Noun, dat s πιστις  
ὑψηλος, η, ον high, proud, exalted, uplifted  
φρονεῶ think, have in mind  
φοβεομαι fear, be afraid (of), reverence

There is no room for pride in faith. Faith acknowledges an utter indebtedness to God.

### Verse 21

εἰ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τῶν κατὰ φύσιν κλάδων οὐκ  
ἐφείσατο, οὐδὲ σοῦ φείσεται.

φυσις, εως f nature, natural condition  
φειδομαι spare, refrain from

The evidence for the inclusion or omission of μη πως is finely balanced. Wright thinks it hard to explain as a gloss.

φείσεται Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s  
φειδομαι

"Here, too, there is a strange echo of an earlier passage, 8:32: God did not spare the beloved son. Once again, Paul is thinking of the Jews as the Messiah's people according to the flesh; but this time their fate is held up as a warning to Gentile Christians. This is what happens if you regard yourself as automatically part of God's people, instead of continuing by faith alone. Faith remains the only valid badge of membership; anything else will lead inevitably to 'boasting.'" Wright.

### Verses 19-21 – Postscript

Wright comments, "What does the threat of being cut off actually mean? After the long argument of 3:21-8:39, it is highly unlikely that Paul would envisage individual Christians being justified by faith at one moment, assured of 'sharing in the glory of God' (5:2; 8:30), and at another moment losing both faith and salvation. On the contrary; his regular view is that when God begins a good work, through the gospel and the Spirit, that good work will come to completion (Phil 1:6). What is more likely is that this is a warning to an entire church (as, for instance, in the messages to the churches of Asia in Revelation 2-3). Individual Christians may be muddled or sinful, but they will be saved, even if only, in some cases, 'as through fire' (1 Cor 3:15). A church, however, that begins to boast in the way Paul is warning against may not last another generation. The only way forward is through faith; and faith, by its very nature, means dependence on God, rather than confidence in human status, birth, privilege or merit."

### Verse 22

ἴδε οὖν χρηστότητα καὶ ἀποτομίαν θεοῦ· ἐπὶ  
μὲν τοὺς πεσόντας ἀποτομία, ἐπὶ δὲ σὲ  
χρηστότης θεοῦ, ἐὰν ἐπιμένῃς τῇ χρηστότητι,  
ἐπεὶ καὶ σὺ ἐκκοπήσῃ.

χρηστοτης, ητος f kindness, goodness,  
mercy

Cf. 2:4.

ἀποτομία, ας f severity, cutting off  
πεσόντας Verb, aor act ptc, m acc pl πιπτω  
fall, fall down, fall to one's ruin

Cf. v. 11.

ἐὰν if, even if, though  
ἐπιμένῃς Verb, aor act subj, 2 s ἐπιμενω  
remain, stay, persist in  
ἐπεὶ since, otherwise

Used here in the unusual sense of 'otherwise.'

ἐκκοπτω cut off, cut down, remove

Paul's words "function to counter the egotism that the Gentile Christians in Rome are displaying, not only toward Jews but also toward God himself." Moo.

### Verse 23

κάκεινοι δέ, ἐὰν μὴ ἐπιμένωσι τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ,  
ἐγκεντρισθήσονται· δυνατὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς  
πάλιν ἐγκεντρίσαι αὐτούς.

κάκεινος, η, ο contraction of και ἐκεινος  
and that one, and he

ἀπιστία, ας f unbelief, unfaithfulness  
ἐγκεντριζω v.17

δυνατος, η, ον possible, strong, powerful,  
able  
παλιν again, once more

**Verse 24**

εἰ γὰρ σὺ ἐκ τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ἐξεκόπης  
ἀγριελαιίου καὶ παρὰ φύσιν ἐνεκεντρίσθης εἰς  
καλλιέλαιον, πόσῳ μᾶλλον οὗτοι οἱ κατὰ  
φύσιν ἐγκεντρίσθησονται τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐλαίᾳ.

φυσίς v.21

ἐξεκόπης Verb, aor pass indic, 2 s ἐκκοπῶ  
cut off, remove

ἀγριελαιῖος v.17

παρὰ preposition with contrary to  
ἐνεκεντρίσθης Verb, aor pass indic, 2 s  
ἐγκεντρίζω

καλλιέλαιος, οὐ f cultivated olive tree

πόσος, η, ον how much

μᾶλλον adv more, rather, more than that

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

ἐλαία v.17

"Paul stops short here of predicting that God will graft unbelieving Israel back into the people of God again – but only just short." His words "prepare the way for the explicit prediction of v.26." Moo.

The very picture Paul uses underlines two vital points:

- i) The blessings enjoyed by Gentile Christians are precisely the covenant blessings God promised to Abraham;
- ii) The only way for Jews to share in those blessings is the same way in which Gentile Christians have come to share in them, namely, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Both of these clear points pull the rug from under the feet of dispensational claims that Jews and Christians have separate promises and separate paths to salvation.

**Verse 25**

Οὐ γὰρ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ  
μυστήριον τοῦτο, ἵνα μὴ ᾔτε ἑαυτοῖς φρόνιμοι,  
ὅτι πάρωσις ἀπὸ μέρους τῷ Ἰσραὴλ γέγονεν  
ἄχρι οὗ τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθῃ,

θέλω wish, will

ἀγνοεῶ not know, be ignorant, fail to  
understand

Indicating an important point is being made,  
cf. 1:13; 1 Cor 10:1; 12:1; 2 Cor 1:8; 1 Thess  
4:13.

ἵνα μὴ ᾔτε ἑαυτοῖς φρόνιμοι cf. Prov 3:7.

μυστηριον, οὐ n secret, mystery (of  
something formerly unknown but now  
revealed)

Cf. Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 2:1; 4:1; 15:51; Eph 1:9;  
3:3,4,9; Col 1:26,27; 2:2; 4:3; 1 Tim 3:9,16.  
Paul uses the word 'mystery' of the plan and  
purpose of God revealed through the gospel of  
Jesus Christ – particularly of the inclusion of  
the Gentiles in his plan. The mystery referred  
to here is described in three clauses:

- i) Israel has experienced a hardening in part
- ii) Until the full number of the Gentiles has come in
- iii) And so all Israel will be saved.

παρὰ preposition with dat with, in the  
presence of

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

φρονιμος, ον wise, sensible

παρωσις, εως f stubbornness, lack of  
feeling

Cf. 11:7. Paul is not here making a new point  
but is summarising what he has said earlier.

μερος, ος n part, piece, in part, partly

ἀπο μερους – in part, partly – refers to the fact  
that the hardening was not total in its extent.  
There remains 'a remnant'.

γένονεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s γινομαι

ἄχρι (and ἄχρις), ἄχρι οὗ until

πλήρωμα, τος n fulness, completeness

There is considerable discussion on the  
meaning of the term πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν. It  
may refer to the gospel having been preached  
among all the nations and a people having  
been saved from every tribe and tongue. Black  
suggests that πλήρωμα is a technical term  
taken from Jewish apocalyptic.

εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in

"Paul does not believe that all Gentiles  
everywhere will believe the gospel, any more  
than they have done so far. He believes, rather,  
that there is a mode of 'completion' (perhaps,  
when the gospel has been announced to all the  
nations?) in God's mind... Until this has been  
reached, final judgment will be delayed,  
leaving those still impenitent in their state of  
'hardening.' And this 'hardening,' as we saw,  
leads to judgment, unless those subject to it  
come to their senses, repent, and believe (2:3-  
6)." Wright.

**Verse 26**

καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται· καθὼς  
γέγραπται: Ἦξει ἐκ Σιών ὁ ῥύόμενος,  
ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβ.

οὕτως adv. thus, in this way

πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ – there are four basic  
interpretations:

- i) All Israel = the whole church, Jew and Gentile believers in Jesus Christ, which constitutes the whole family of Abraham (Calvin, Wright).
- ii) All Israel = national Israel who will be converted at the return of Christ (Premillennialists);
- iii) A large part of ethnic Israel to be converted after the bulk of Gentile conversion (Hodge, Vos, Murray, Moo);
- iv) Elect Jews who are even now being added to the church (Bavink, Hendriksen).

Moo argues that "Paul here predicts the salvation of a significant number of Jews at the time of Christ's return in glory. The present 'remnant' of Israel will be expanded to include a much larger number of Jews who will enter the eternal kingdom along with converted Gentiles." Hence, he suggests, Paul applies the quotation from Isaiah 59:20-21 to Christ at his return.

Wright argues that there is no temporal sequence here; οὕτως means 'thus', 'in this way', 'by this means' not 'then'. There are no special terms for the salvation of Jews.

"Abraham's true family are 'not those of the law only, but all who share in Abraham's faith' (4:16); 'the Jew is the one in secret' (2:29); 'you are all one in the Messiah, Jesus, and, if you belong to the Messiah, you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise' (Gal 3:28-9); 'it is we who are "the circumcision," we who ... put no confidence in the flesh' (Phil 3:3-4). These are simply the tip of the iceberg. Paul has spent half his writing life telling his readers that Abraham's family, Israel, the Jews, the circumcision, are neither reaffirmed as they stand, nor 'superseded' by a superior group, nor 'replaced' with someone else – that is what he is arguing against in 11:13-24 – but transformed, through the death and resurrection of Israel's Messiah and the Spirit of Israel's own God, so that Israel is now, as was always promised, both less and more than the physical family of Abraham: less as in 9:6-13; more, as in 4:13-25.

"In particular, 9:6 gives the lie to the constantly repeated assertion that one cannot make 'Israel' in 11:26 mean something different from what it means in 11:25. 'Not all who are of Israel are in fact Israel'; Paul opened his great argument with a clear signal that he was redefining 'Israel,' and here the argument comes full circle...

"The phrase 'all Israel,' then, is best taken as a polemical redefinition, in line with Paul's redefinition of 'Jew' in 2:29, of 'circumcision' in 2:29 and Phil 3:3, and of 'seed of Abraham' in Romans 4, Galatians 3, and Rom 9:6-9. It belongs with what seems indubitably the correct reading of 'the Israel of God' in Gal 6:16."

This is the way in which God is saving 'all Israel'. Wright continues, "The best interpretation of what Paul is saying is this: 'A hardening has come upon part of Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in; and *that process is the way in which God will save "all Israel."* This is in fulfilment of the scripture ...' (On the 'hardening' see Deut 29:4; Isa 6:9-10; 29:10; 2 Macc 6:12-15; see also the Commentary on 9:14-18.)"

σωθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s σωζω  
save

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω  
ἦκω come, have come, be present

The text in Isaiah 59:20-21 reads 'The Redeemer will come *to* Zion,' but this is changed by Paul to read '*... from* Zion.' Paul may be assimilating the wording to other passages in the Old Testament which speak of deliverance coming 'from Zion' (e.g. Ps 14:7; 53:6; 110:2; Isa 2:3).

Moo thinks Paul may have used these words to imply that deliverance will come from *heaven*, i.e. the heavenly Zion.

But Wright argues that Paul is not using this text to speak of the Parousia. Again, he argues that Paul has the entire context of the quotation in mind. "The backbone of the scriptural citation comes from Isa 59:20-21. Isaiah 59 opens with a lament for Israel's continuing sinfulness; this includes vv. 7-8, which Paul has quoted as part of his indictment in 3:15-17. Then we read of YHWH himself intervening, wearing righteousness as a breastplate and salvation as a helmet (v. 17). YHWH will bring terrible judgment, so as to be feared by the nations of the earth, from east to west (vv. 18-19). In that context, 'a deliverer will come to Zion [or: he will come to Zion as deliverer], and to those in Jacob who turn from transgression.' At least, that is the meaning of the MT. The LXX has already altered this to mean 'the deliverer will come on behalf of Zion, and will turn ungodliness away from Jacob.' Paul has altered this again; the deliverer, he says, shall come out of Zion (ἔξει ἐκ Σιων ὁ ῥυόμενος ...). Perhaps he still has Deuteronomy in mind as well, because in 33:2, the beginning of the blessing of Moses, which ends with the salvation of Israel (33:28-29), we find 'The Lord comes from Sinai' (Κύριος ἐκ Σινᾶ ἔκει ...). So far from pulling the text toward the parousia, he seems rather to be emphasising the opposite: the redeemer, by whom he must mean Jesus the Messiah, 'comes' from Zion into all the world, like YHWH 'coming' from Sinai to establish the covenant and give Israel its inheritance. As the Messiah does so, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob. Once again texts that were unambiguously about YHWH in the Scripture are taken by Paul to refer to Jesus. And once again texts that looked forward to a future event are taken by Paul, not indeed to exclude the many still-future elements of his gospel (see Romans 8 and 1 Corinthians 15), but to highlight the significance of what is already happening through the gospel."

ῥυομαι save, rescue

ἀποστρεφω turn away, remove

ἀσεβεια, ας f godlessness, wickedness

Paul alters the text of his quotation to shift the focus from Israel's repentance to God's sovereign act of removing their sin.

### Verse 27

καὶ αὕτη αὐτοῖς ἢ παρ' ἐμοῦ διαθήκη, ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν.

παρα preposition with gen with

διαθηκη, ης covenant, will, testament

ὅταν when

ἀφέλωμαι Verb, aor midd subj, 1 s ἀφαιρεω  
take away

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

Wright comments, "The substance of the covenant is this: God will take away Israel's sins. This is not, then, an alternative 'covenant,' a way to salvation for Jews and Jews only, irrespective of the entire apocalyptic salvation history Paul has laid out in 9:6-10:21. Nor has it much to do with the 'pilgrimage of the nations to Zion,' anticipated in some biblical and post-biblical prophecy (e.g., Isa 2:2-3; Ps Sol 17:26-46). At most it would be an ironic reversal of that whole idea. This is the same covenant renewal Paul has spoken of again and again in the letter: The hope for Israel according to the flesh lies not in clinging to its privileged status and hoping that, despite everything, God will in the end make a way of salvation other than that revealed in Jesus the Messiah and by the Spirit. Nor does it make any sense to suppose that in the last minute massive numbers of Jews alive at the time will suddenly arrive at Christian faith. What would Gentiles alive at that time say about God's impartiality, one of the major themes of the whole letter? What might they say about God's constancy? No: the hope of salvation lies in the Messiah as the τέλος νόμου ... the Torah's true goal, and in the renewal that remains available through him. God's salvation must be found where God has accomplished it, revealed it, and proclaimed it."

And Wright concludes his comments on these verses as follows: "This, Paul is saying, is how God is saving 'All Israel,' the people promised long ago to Abraham. God is doing it, not by having two tracks, a Jewish one and a Christian one ...; not by having a 'Christian' scheme in the present and then re-inventing a 'Jewish one at the last minute; nor by suddenly relenting and allowing a partial last-minute version of the 'favoured nation clause' that had been sternly ruled out up to that point; but by God doing, throughout the period that begins with the Messiah's death and resurrection, what had always been promised in Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and elsewhere. This is probably the implication of the last clause of v. 27: 'Whenever I take away their sins' (ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν ...). That is, God is providing in the present time the path and the means of covenant renewal, of forgiveness, of healing and transformation, of life in and by God's Spirit: the way (in other words) of faith. Paul meant what he said in 11:23, picking up 10:1-13: They can be grafted in again, if they do not remain in unbelief. That rules out any suggestion of a mode of salvation, or path to salvation, which does not involve the faith spoken of in chap. 10. I therefore conclude that in this passage Paul speaks of the ultimate salvation of all God's people, not only Gentiles but also an increasing number of Jews, a salvation to be brought about through the suspension of judgment (involving the 'hardening' of those who do not believe) so that the gospel could spread to the Gentile world, and so by that means ethnic Jews might become 'jealous' and so come to believe in their own Messiah."

### Verse 28

κατὰ μὲν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἐχθροὶ δι' ὑμᾶς, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἐκλογὴν ἀγαπητοὶ διὰ τοὺς πατέρας·

εὐαγγέλιον, ου n good news, gospel  
ἐχθρος, α, ον enemy, one hated

"The enmity referred to may be from Israel toward God or from God toward Israel. It is best to take it both ways: hostility exists between God and his people Israel because of their refusal to submit to God's righteousness in Christ (see 10:3)." Moo.

ἐκλογη, ης f election, choosing  
ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved  
πατηρ, πατρος m father

"... It certainly does not mean that every Jew from that day to this, or every Jew in some hypothetical final generation, will eventually be saved. It means, rather, that God's own desire, like Paul's, is for them to find salvation in the full and final way it has now been achieved and unveiled. God has not written them off." Wright.

### Verse 29

ἀμεταμέλητα γὰρ τὰ χαρίσματα καὶ ἡ κληῖσις τοῦ θεοῦ.

ἀμεταμελητος, ον free from regret,  
irrevocable

χαρισμα, τος n gift (from God)

Cf. 5:15-16; 6:23.

κλησις, εως f call, calling

God's word has not and cannot fail.

### Verse 30

ὡσπερ γὰρ ὑμεῖς ποτε ἠπειθήσατε τῷ θεῷ, νῦν δὲ ἠλεήθητε τῇ τούτων ἀπειθείᾳ,

ὡσπερ as, even as, just as

ποτέ once, formerly, at one time

ἀπειθεω disobey, be an unbeliever

ἠλεήθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl ἔλεαω  
and ἔλεεω be merciful; pass. receive  
mercy

ἀπειθεια, ας f disobedience

### Verse 31

οὕτως καὶ οὗτοι νῦν ἠπειθήσαν τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλέει ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ νῦν ἐλεηθῶσιν·

οὕτως v.26

ὑμετερος, α, ον possessive adj of 2 pl your

A dative of advantage – 'for the sake of ...'

ἐλεος, ους n mercy, compassion

ἐλεηθῶσιν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl ἔλεαω  
and ἔλεεω

Some MSS read νυν ἐλεηθωσιν (x B D<sup>ef</sup>) but the νυν is omitted by many MSS while ὕστερον (subsequently) is added in its place by others. The νυν is probably original being the harder reading (Barrett, Black, Moo). The reading with νυν suggests that the Jews are already being gathered in.

Wright adds, "The mercy that is shown to Israel according to the flesh is not something for which they will have to wait until some putative final day; it is not, therefore, something that can get the church off the hook by postponing a serious reckoning with contemporary Judaism until a conveniently delayed eschaton – as the laissez-faire thought of the Enlightenment might urge. It is available 'now'; and Paul's kinsfolk can, he hopes and believes, be provoked into seeking it by being 'jealous' of the way in which Israel's privileges are being enjoyed by the Gentiles. And this is precisely where the section began (9:1-5)."

### Verse 32

συνέκλεισεν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς πάντας εἰς ἀπειθειαν ἵνα τοὺς πάντας ἐλεήσῃ.

Cf. Gal 3:22.

συνέκλεισεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s  
συγκλειω make or keep prisoner  
ἀπειθεια, ας f disobedience  
ἐλεήσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἐλεαω and ἐλεεω

"God has brought all men into a position which merits nothing but his wrath in order that his relations with them may be marked by nothing but mercy." Barrett.

### Verses 33-36

"The concluding doxology emphasises the sovereignty and inscrutability of God. Paul does not think that God's ways and purposes are now still invisible; they have been revealed in the Messiah. But he does believe that without the revelation granted in the gospel nobody would ever have worked them out. And yet, seen with hindsight, God's way of putting the world to rights, God's way of doing all things from creation to new creation, turns out to be spectacularly right, full of wisdom and insight, of appropriate judgment and overflowing mercy." Wright.

### Verse 33

ᾧ βάθος πλούτου καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως θεοῦ· ὡς ἀνεξεραύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεξιχνίαστοι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ.

ὦ Ο!

βαθος, ους n depth, greatness  
πλουτος, ου m & n riches, wealth  
σοφια, ας f wisdom, insight, intelligence

Could be translated either:

i) ... the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God (NIV); or

ii) ... the depth of the riches, wisdom and knowledge of God (Barrett, Cranfield, Wright).

γνωσις, εως f knowledge, understanding  
ἀνεξεραυνητος, ον unfathomable, i.e.  
impossible of explanation by human  
minds  
κριμα, τος n judgement, verdict,  
condemnation, punishment

I.e. his "executive' decision for the direction of salvation history (see Ps 19:9; 36:6; 119:75)." Moo.

ἀνεξιχνιαστος, ον untraceable, i.e.  
impossible of understanding by human  
minds, unfathomable  
ὁδος, ου f way, path, road, journey

"Human arrogance seizes upon this inscrutability as a reason to doubt, to mock, or to question God's wisdom or goodness; the humility proper to faith stands in awe that the God of all creation is the God of the gospel of Jesus, whose utter trustworthiness was demonstrated once for all in Jesus' resurrection." Wright.

### Verse 34

Τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου; ἢ τίς σύμβουλος αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο;

The three questions of this and the following verse may correspond in reverse order to the three attributes in v.33, i.e. knowledge, wisdom and riches.

ἔγνω Verb, aor act indic, 3 s γινωσκω  
νους, νοος, νοι, νουν m mind, thought,  
purpose  
συμβουλος, ου m counsellor, adviser

The quotation is from Isaiah 40:13. Yet Christ, by his saving work, discloses the mind of God to us.

Wright comments, "Who has known the mind of the Lord?" asks Isaiah (40:13) at the start of his mighty exposition of God's creative power, the power now placed at the service of Israel-in-exile, God's unchangeable might now to be unleashed to bring about the return from exile through the work of the servant. Paul has cast himself in the role of present-day prophet, announcing the Isaianic gospel of the servant (10:14-17); now he celebrates Isaiah's God, the one through whom that gospel is initiated and confirmed."

### Verse 35

ἢ τίς προέδωκεν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται αὐτῷ;

προέδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s προδιδομι  
give first

ἀνταποδίδωμι repay, return

Cf. Job 41:3. "God is debtor to none, his favour is never compensation." Murray. "If the first two questions remind us of how far we are from fully understanding God, the final question reminds us of God's grace, a great theme of these chapters." Moo.

### Verse 36

ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα· αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

Paul's words express his understanding of the plan of salvation. They are not a reflection of Hellenistic philosophy such as Stoicism – though Paul here uses similar language. Paul's words call us to humility before God.

δόξα, ἡς f glory  
αἰῶνας Noun, acc pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age,  
eternity

Chapters 12-16 which follow are an exposition of what it means to give God all the glory.

### Postscript

"In Romans 9-11 Paul belongs in the tradition of the great psalmists. He starts with an urgent problem; he wrestles with it in grief and prayer; he retells the story of Israel, laying out God's acts from of old and in the present. Finally he bursts through to a paeon of praise. From this point in the letter we look back and see, as glorious mountain peaks, 4:24-25 and particularly 8:28-30 and 38-39. But where we now stand is higher than them all, so high that some climbers feel dizzy and prefer to return quickly to the lower slopes. Paul is not of such a mind. He will stay and give praise. This, he implies, is what we humans, we Jews, were made for." Wright.