

καταλλαγή (*katallage*). The reconciliation is the accomplished atonement (2 Cor 5:18). If the death and resurrection of Christ is the reconciliation of the world, the resurrection of believers is implied in "life from the dead."

Even if "life from the dead" is only the conversion of Israel, it is still end-historical -- not some isolated event *prior* to the Parousia. Moreover, the strong overtones of literal resurrection would be present, answering to the intimations of 11: 25 that some stupendous event is contemplated in the "entering in" of the Gentiles, momentous enough to motivate the conversion of Israel. That "entering in" must be an eschatological "entering in" of Gentiles into the Kingdom by resurrection. Such an event seems to be in view in Matt 8:11, 12 and Luke 13:28, 29. Further, this picture from the Gospels reinforces the point now being made that a believing ethnic Israel perdures through the generations as those who walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham (Rom 4:12).

Israel's Hardening

In Rom 11:25 Paul says that ". . . a hardening has come to Israel in part until . . ." If verse 15a is read as God's reaction to Israel's stumbling (v12), that point would seem to be the beginning of the hardening and blindness. If, however, the "casting away" of verse 15a is Israel's rejection of Christ, associated with the cross and atonement, then a new picture emerges. God has not cast away Israel. Paul is vehement on this point, and many Old Testament promises make this plain. Hence, it is better to conclude that Israel's rejection of Christ is evidence of a hardening and blindness going back to her deliverance from Egypt, and evidenced in succeeding ages. Israel rejected Moses and Samuel. Isaiah's prophecy (Isa 6) concerning blindness and closing of the ears of all except a remnant is found to be true in Christ's ministry as it was in Isaiah's day. It is true even up to the end of apostolic record (Acts 28) and presumably is continuing. Thus the blindness and hardening of part of Israel is not limited to the time of the rejection of Christ and subsequently, but is an ancient fault of Israel. The marvel is that even as God disciplines by bringing successive world empires against Israel, He never rejects her, but rather maintains the ultimate purpose of saving Israel through disciplinary judgments.

There is thus a corroboration of Paul's perspective in Rom 11:12 where the larger contours of Israel's relation to world history are disposed in four stages: (1) Israel's rejection of Christ; (2) blessing to the world (with some of Israel being saved); (3) salvation of all Israel when an elect contingent from Israel and the nations enters into the Kingdom; and (4) a final period of much greater blessing when the nations rejoice with his people (Rom 15:7-13).

At the heart of the whole scheme is God's fidelity to His Israelitish covenant. In order to accomplish His full purpose for Israel and for the world. He must first call out a people for his Name. Gentiles as Gentiles, as fellow heirs with the believing remnant from Israel. When that great company (Rom 11:25) enters the Kingdom. Israel's blindness is removed and in this marvelous manner -- even thus -- (11:26) all Israel is saved,