

[A Little History on Israel's Future](#)

June 15th, 2007

(Compiled by Nathan Busenitz) From Pulpit Magazine

Will there be a mass conversion of ethnic Jews at the end of the age?

Matt Waymeyer's two articles have answered "yes" to that question, based on Paul's teaching in Romans 11:25–26.

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob."

But what do other exegetes from church history have to say in response to this question. Many others could be added to the following list, but here's a "brief" survey of twenty five. (A word of thanks goes out to Michael Vlach for the first eight of these – [see his website for bibliographic info.](#))

1. Justin Martyr (c. 100-165) held that the tribes of Israel would be gathered and restored in accord with what the prophet Zechariah predicted:

And what the people of the Jews shall say and do, when they see Him coming in glory, has been thus predicted by Zechariah the prophet: "I will command the four winds to gather the scattered children; I will command the north wind to bring them, and the south wind, that it keep not back. And then in Jerusalem there shall be great lamentation, not the lamentation of mouths or of lips, but the lamentation of the heart; and they shall rend not their garments, but their hearts. Tribe by tribe they shall mourn, and then they shall look on Him whom they have pierced; and they shall say, Why, O Lord, hast Thou made us to err from Thy way? The glory which our fathers blessed, has for us been turned into shame."

2. Tertullian (c. 155-230) urged Christians to eagerly anticipate and rejoice over the coming restoration of Israel: "It will be fitting for the Christian to rejoice, and not to grieve, at the restoration of Israel, if it be true, (as it is), that the whole of our hope is intimately united with the remaining expectation of Israel."

3. Origen (185-254) believed in "two callings of Israel." The first calling of Israel refers to Israel's calling before Christ that eventually led to their stumbling and falling. The second calling of Israel, however, is future and will take place after the period of the fullness of the Gentiles. In Origen's words: "But when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, then will all Israel, having been called again, be saved."

4. John Chrysostom (349–407) said this in regards to Romans 11:26:

[Regarding the fact] that they [the Jews] shall believe and be saved, he [Paul] brings Isaiah to witness, who cries aloud and says, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." (Isaiah 59:20.) ... If then this has been promised, but has never yet happened in their case, nor have they ever enjoyed the remission of sins by baptism, certainly it will come to pass.

In his commentary on Matthew, Chrysostom also noted:

To show therefore that [Elijah] the Tishbite comes before that other [second] advent . . . He said this. . . . And what is this reason? That when He is come, He may persuade the Jews to believe in Christ, and that they may not all



utterly perish at His coming. Wherefore He too, guiding them on to that remembrance, saith, “And he shall restore all things;” that is, shall correct the unbelief of the Jews that are then in being.

5. Augustine (354-430) concurred:

It is a familiar theme in the conversation and heart of the faithful, that in the last days before the judgment the Jews shall believe in the true Christ, that is, our Christ, by means of this great and admirable prophet Elias who shall expound the law to them. . . . When, therefore, he is come, he shall give a spiritual explanation of the law which the Jews at present understand carnally, and shall thus “turn the heart of the father to the son,” that is, the heart of the fathers to the children.

6. Cyril of Alexandria (378-444): Although it was rejected, Israel will also be saved eventually, a hope which Paul confirms For indeed, Israel will be saved in its own time and will be called at the end, after the calling of the Gentiles.”

7. Theodoret of Cyrus (393-457): And he [Paul] urges them not to despair of the salvation of the other Jews; for when the Gentiles have received the message, even they, the Jews, will believe, when the excellent Elijah comes, bringing to them the doctrine of faith. For even the Lord said this in the sacred gospels: ‘Elijah is coming, and he will restore all things.’

8. Cassiodorus (c. 485-585) [commenting on Psalm 103:9]: This verse can be applied also to the Jewish people, who we know are to be converted at the world’s end. On this Paul says: Blindness in part has happened in Israel, that the fullness of the Gentiles should come in, and so all Israel should be saved.

9. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274): It is possible to designate a terminus, because it seems that the blindness of the Jews will endure until all the pagans chosen for salvation have accepted the faith. And this is in accord with what Paul says below about the salvation of the Jews, namely, that after the conversion of the pagans, all Israel will be saved.

10. The Geneva Study Bible (16th century): He [Paul] speaks of the whole nation, not of any one part. . . . The blindness of the Jews is neither so universal that the Lord has no elect in that nation, neither will it be continual: for there will be a time in which they also (as the prophets have foretold) will effectually embrace that which they now so stubbornly for the most part reject and refuse.

11. William Perkins (1558–1602): The Lord says, All the nations shall be blessed in Abraham: Hence I gather that the nation of the Jews shall be called, and converted to the participation of this blessing: when, and how, God knows: but that it shall be done before the end of the world we know.

12. Elnathan Parr (d. 1630) [on Romans 11:26]: That all the elect shall be saved? Who ever doubted that? But of the calling of the Jews there is doubt. He calls their salvation a secret or mystery but there is nothing mysterious about all the elect being saved. He shows that there is an unbroken reference to Israel/Jacob, that is, ethnic Israel. [From verses 25-28 Parr concludes,] Before the end of the world the Jews in regard to their multitude will be called.

According to the *Banner of Truth* article on Parr’s interpretation of Romans 11:26: In this [Parr] is followed by Matthew Poole and Matthew Henry. . . . [More recent] expositors who endorse Parr’s interpretation are Charles Hodge, Robert Haldane, John Brown of Edinburgh, H G C Moule, Frederic Godet, W G T Shedd, Prof John Murray, Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, C E B Cranfield, James Dunn and Thomas R Schreiner in his recently published commentary on Romans.

13. Matthew Poole (1624–1679): [On Romans 11:26] By Israel here (as in the precedent verse) you must understand, the nation and people of the Jews. And by all Israel is not meant every individual Israelite, but many, or (it may be) the greatest part of them. . . . These prophecies and promises [from Isaiah 27:9; 59:20 and Jer. 31:33], though they were in part fulfilled when Christ came in the flesh, (see Acts 3:26,) yet there will be a more full and complete accomplishment thereof upon the Jewish nation and people towards the end of the world.

14. Increase Mather (1639–1723): That there shall be a general conversion of the tribes of Israel, is a truth which in some measure hath been known and believed in all ages of the church of God, since the Apostles' days.

15. Matthew Henry (1662–1714): Another thing that qualifies this doctrine of the Jews rejection is that though for the present they are cast off, yet the rejection is NOT final; but, when the fullness of time is come, they will be taken in again. They are not cast off for ever, but mercy is remembered in the midst of wrath.

. . . The Jews shall continue in blindness, till God hath performed his whole work among the Gentiles, and then their turn will come next to be remembered. This was the purpose and ordination of God, for wise and holy ends; things should not be ripe for the Jews' conversion till the church was replenished with the Gentiles, that it might appear that God's taking them again was not because he had need of them, but of his own free grace.

16. Cotton Mather (1663–1728): This day, from the Dust, where I lay prostrate before the Lord, I lifted up my Cries . . . for the conversion of the Jewish nation, and for my own having the Happiness, at some time or other, to Baptize a Jew that should by my ministry be brought home unto the Lord.

17. Thomas Boston (1676–1732): There is a day coming when there shall be a national conversion of the Jews or Israelites. The now blinded and rejected Jews shall at length be converted into the faith of Christ.

18. James Robe (1688–1753): Me thinks I hear the nation of the Jews (for such is the cry of their case) crying aloud to you from their dispersion, . . . we have now been rejected of God for more than sixteen hundred years, because of our unbelief, and for this long, very long while, wrath to the uttermost hath been lying upon us! There are many promises and predictions that we shall be grafted in again. . . . Pray therefore, and wrestle with God, that he may, according to his promise, pour forth upon the Spirit of grace and supplication, that we may look upon him whom we have pierced, and mourn. . . . Help us with your prayers.

19. The Puritans in General:

According to Ian Murray, *The Puritan Hope*, 43: This same belief concerning the future of the Jews is to be found very widely in seventeenth-century Puritan literature. It appears in the works of such well-known Puritans as John Owen, Thomas Manton and John Flavel. . . . It is also handled in a rich array of commentaries, both folios and quartos – David Dickson on the Psalms, George Hutcheson on the Minor Prophets, Jeremiah Burroughs on Hosea, William Greenhill on Ezekiel, Elnathan Parr on Romans and James Durham on Revelation: a list which could be greatly extended.

According to J. Van Den Berg, *Puritan Eschatology*, 140: For . . . virtually all Dutch theologians of the seventeenth century, 'the whole of Israel' indicated the fullness of the people of Israel 'according to the flesh': in other words, the fullness of the Jewish people. This meant that there was a basis for an expectation of a future conversion of the Jews—an expectation which was shared by a large majority of Dutch theologians.

20. John Gill (1697–1771): And so all Israel shall be saved. . . . Meaning not the mystical spiritual Israel of God, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles, who shall appear to be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, when all God's elect among the latter are gathered in, which is the sense many give into; but the people of the Jews, the generality of them, the body of that nation, called "the fullness" of them, Romans 11:12, and relates to the latter day, when a nation of them shall be born again at once; . . . when they as a body, even the far greater part of them that shall be in being, shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their King; shall acknowledge Jesus to be the true Messiah, and shall look to him, believe on him, and be saved by him from wrath to come.

21. Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758): . . . the Jews in all their dispersions shall cast away their old infidelity, and shall have their hearts wonderfully changed, and abhor themselves for their past unbelief and obstinacy. They shall flow together to the blessed Jesus, penitently, humbly, and joyfully owning him as their glorious King and only Savior, and shall with all their hearts, as one heart and voice, declare his praises unto other nations. . . . Nothing is more certainly foretold than this national conversion of the Jews in Romans 11.

22. Charles Hodge (1797–1878): The second great event, which, according to the common faith of the Church, is to precede the second advent of Christ, is the national conversion of the Jews. . . . The restoration of the Jews to the

privileges of God's people is included in the ancient predictions and promises made respecting them. . . . The future restoration of the Jews is, in itself, a more probable event than the introduction of the Gentiles into the church of God.

23. Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813–1843): Converted Israel . . . will give life to the dead world. . . . just as we have found, among the parched hills of Judah, that the evening dew, coming silently down, gave life to every plant, making the grass to spring and the flowers to put forth their sweetest fragrance, so shall converted Israel be when they come as dew upon a dead, dry world. The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.

24. J.C. Ryle (1816–1900): It always seemed to me that as we take literally the texts foretelling that the walls of Babylon shall be cast down, so we ought to take literally the texts foretelling that the walls of Zion shall be built up—that as according to prophecy the Jews were literally scattered, so according to prophecy the Jews will be literally gathered—and that as the least and minutest predictions were made good on the subject of our Lord's coming to suffer, so the minutest predictions shall be made good which describe our Lord's coming to reign. And I have long felt it is one of the greatest shortcomings of the Church of Christ that we ministers do not preach enough about this advent of Christ, and that private believers do not think enough about it.

25. Charles Spurgeon (1834–1892): I think we do not attach sufficient importance to the restoration of the Jews. We do not think enough of it. But certainly, if there is anything promised in the Bible it is this.

(Spurgeon again): The day shall yet come when the Jews, who were the first Apostles to the Gentiles, the first missionaries to us, who were far off, shall be gathered in again. Until that shall be, the fullness of the Churches' glory can never come. Matchless benefits to the world are bound up with the restoration of Israel; their gathering in shall be as life from the dead.