

We would come to think of the sins and struggles, ups and downs of God's people of the OT for life and living, even as we would also think of our own stumblings and cares of life, a few believers like Paul with an outburst of "who will deliver me from the body of this death"; and what we really come down to is that nothing in this life is worth to the full extent of every political, social, and economic prosperity--like-wise even security for self and family, concluding also with Paul that if "in this life only we have hope we are of all men most miserable." The Message of the Writing Prophets always contained this element for more immediate and eternal hope, centered around one great and one greater theme: (1) The theme of the Day of the LORD with true justice, punishment of the wicked, and comfort for the righteous, this as we have seen in the Prophets previously having both a more immediate and then an end of the world application; (2) The Prophet Messiah was the great hope for the future, sometimes as in the Law of Moses, a prophet like Moses, sometimes with a new kingdom like the kingdom of David; and centered around this Christ in Greek for the Hebrew word of Messiah was the full implications of a modified salvation from God. Perhaps not modified as much as we might think, only in the sense of a new birth with a spirit to do the righteousness of God, removing the stony heart of Ezekiel, only in a sense of a righteousness by faith and for the Gentiles that was always in the Law and the Prophets but needed to be more widespread and needed clarification; for recall that Jesus told the religious leader of His time they should do the matters of the Law that have more weight with God, such as "mercy, justice, and faith", making it clear that these matters like faith were in the Law and the Prophets all the time. Also you are reminded that it was the Prophet Habakkuk who

wrote, "the just" {or justified} shall live by faith"; although this may surprise you along with the fact that Abraham "believed God and it was imputed to him for righteousness". In short, faith and righteousness by faith was practiced in the OT as well as in the NT, by looking forward to the Crucifixion and Salvation from Christ in the OT and by looking at and behind for it in the NT times, which would also include us.

### **9-1: Interaction: God with the people, then the people with God.**

We just can not determine who was and who is God's people without a consideration of the time in the history of God's interaction with people. For example, we must consider the covenants that were made between God and man, some of the interactions of which I write; such as the "everlasting covenant" that God made with Abraham for "righteousness by faith". At the same time or near the same time, I believe, we must recognized another covenant with Abraham which was to make of his lineage a great nation--which would, of course, be the nation of Israel. Then we can not miss the love that God has for the land of Canaan or Palestine, and of how often in the Prophets the special ownership that He claims for that land. Likewise, at some point the promise of the "promises" of a blessing for the whole world of a "seed", which Seed is Christ, must be separated from either the promise for a great nation and the promise of the everlasting covenant for righteousness by faith. Then at Mount Sinai enters the "old covenant", which was a new covenant then, but after Christ became an old covenant as the "everlasting covenant" took it place with some major modifications and clarifications. Of course for much of this we must rely heavily on Deuteronomy and Hebrews, Deuteronomy for the exact words from God, from Moses, and from the people which spelled out the details of the covenant dictated by God and agreed to by the children of Israel. **{Likewise we will as we complete this volume, even as we have done somewhat previously look at this covenant aspect of the Message, something the Writing Prophets mentioned often.}**

Even as God tells us through the Writing Prophets that He will not do anything without letting His people know, even so do we want to find at what time God told His people about certain decisions God had made in how He would deal with His own people. For example, we are told by the Prophet Zephaniah as to how God was angry with Israel as His people for 70 years. At what point did God get angry, and at what point did God tell His people that He was angry with them. When we think of the prophetic prediction of the 70 years of Captivity, we primarily think of Jeremiah; but it goes all the way back to Isaiah, then Daniel recorded that He read it from Jeremiah and pleaded in prayer to know more about what would happen to His people.

**1. The Old and New Covenants distinguished in Jeremiah as the transition from external law to internal law, Hebrews 8:7 and following and Jeremiah 31:31-34.**

While it is Ezekiel who makes clear to us a major difference in the new covenant while announcing the individualistic nature of salvation where the sons shall not bear the sins of the father, nor vice versa, and the individual "soul that sins it shall die", before going on to "the stony heart will be taken away, and a new heart will be given" {regeneration or the new birth}, it is Jeremiah who before him introduces that individual new birth as the quote from God of "I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts".

Briefly listed below is a summary of some of the differences between the old and the new covenants.

- (1). The first covenant had holes in it; that is, it was not faultless, Hebrews 8:7.
- (2). A transition decision is made by God in Jeremiah 31:31-34 of some days that would come in the future that God would definitely make a new covenant, so that approximately 600 B.C. we have a recording of God's decision for a new covenant.
- (3). This covenant is a national covenant with the nation in the sense that it is "with the house of Israel {we may need to speculate somewhat to the extent that at this point in time in the decision of God as to whether this was the New Israel of Paul and Romans, as we will discuss later in this chapter, or the old Israel, the importance of the Gentiles not having been part of the declared decision of God} and the house of Judah".
- (4). We are reminded in Hebrews 8:9 of the fact of the establishment by God of the old covenant--continuing in the quote from Jeremiah: (a) A covenant that God made with the forefathers of the Jeremiah's people in Jerusalem and Judah, (b) that this covenant was made right after God "took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt"; (c) A new covenant was needed to replace the old in that the children of Israel in the wilderness did not keep the first covenant; (d) When God says about the old covenant that "I disregarded them {says the LORD}, we see here a major decision on the part of God when He saw what they did for 40 years, also when he listened to the pleas from Moses, and perhaps this should read "I discarded them" because God did cast away from eternal life and from the promise of the land at but Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb, and youth under 20--you remember how that 23,000 carcasses fell in one day.
- (5). Characteristics and differences of the new covenant in Hebrews 8:10, and continuing in Jeremiah: (a) it is a covenant that God will make "with the house of Israel", so that it is another national covenant; (b) "will make" some time in the future from the approximately 600 A.D. promise of Jeremiah, although here immediately in this context, we do not have a definite time at which the new covenant will take place as a way that God works between Himself and His people {"after those days" gives us the end days before the new covenant takes place, and we must look into Jeremiah for the context of those days before}; (c) the outstanding characteristic of the new covenant from God's perspective, and even though Jeremiah has

written it in the context you see it to be a direct quote recorded from God {"says the LORD}, God "will put His laws in their mind and write them on their hearts"; (d) God will be their God; and (e) They shall be the people of God. Granted at face value, it would appear that even from the time of the wilderness, God discarded to a certain extent His people, only taking them back up at the time when the new covenant went into effect. However, in the next section, we must look at the details of the legal agreement in the first and old covenant between God and man. **{There is from Creation, and always, some kind of obligation between God and man based on the Creator-creature relationship.}**

More characteristics of the old and new covenant differences: (f) There is no difference among God's people as to who knows more and who knows less about the LORD God, starting with the least of God's people and going up they shall all know God {we must think of the beginning of the last days of Amos and Peter and Acts, where this happened with the democratic outpourings of the Holy Spirit, deciding preliminarily that the new covenant primarily went into effect on that first day of Pentecost after the Ascension, we know that is the time the Spirit came to work in a widespread and life changing manner}; (g) God as part of the new covenant becomes "merciful to their unrighteousness" {here we see a leading into again as always in Romans of the "righteousness by faith", the imputed righteousness from God which is an act of God's mercy}; and (h) God promises as part of the new covenant to remember sin and lawlessness no more from His people.

(6). At that point in time, and we lean now toward the beginning of the "last days", God makes the old covenant "obsolete"; and Paul says that during his time it was "growing old" and about "to vanish away" (Hebrews 8:13)

### **2. Nature and conditions of the Old Covenant between God and God's People.**

We know that after the giving of the LAW--ten commandments, statutes, and regulations, all the national laws that a new nation would require, which were religious but also the civil laws of the nation--then according to God's call for an assembly of the whole congregation, Moses read the "Book of the Covenant" in the hearing of the people (Exodus 24:7).

"And they said, 'All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.'" (24:7b)

This covenant between the people in the wilderness and God was confirmed with blood, the blood being sprinkled on the people by Moses (24:8). The covenant is renewed in Exodus 34, after two new tablets of stone because Moses in reactive anger threw down and broke the first two when down from the mountain he saw the idolatry of the people, and after 3,000 of the leading rebels were killed by the Levites.

What happened about the covenant and God's people is well summarized by Sampey in THE HEART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

"Israel having broken the covenant {they worshiped the golden calf idol while Moses was up on the mountain receiving the commandments, Moses ground it into powder and made the people drink it, also had the Levites slay 3000 of the rebellion leaders}

"And He said {God said}: 'Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people {right now, God is still enraged and reluctant to get back among a sinful people} I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD. For it is an awesome thing that I will do with you. {God never completely tries or gives up on a people; for when this covenant did not work, and He again became angry with His people for 70 years, not any did He bring them back from the Babylonian land of captivity to the Promised Land of Canaan, but then later sent His Son Jesus, whom they crucified, and then the Holy Spirit, Amos and Peter announcing this as another "awesome" thing that God did in history.} (Exodus 34:10)

"Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I am driving out from before you the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going {the covenant between God and God's people was to take priority and obliterate any possible covenants with the people of the land}, lest it be a snare in your midst." (Exodus 34:11)

However it is in Deuteronomy 5 where the 10 commandments, the statutes and the judgments are reviewed on the side of the Jordan River opposite the Promised land, that Moses reminds mostly a new generation of the old covenant with God.

"The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. {The covenant was made originally at Mount Sinai in Horeb.} The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive {the generation 20 and above who refused to take the promises land, culminating their 40 years of rebellions in the sight of God, as victim of the Falling Away, did not live to see this day, nor will live eternally according to Hebrews}. The LORD talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire..." (Exodus 5:2-5)

While Moses does review aspects of the covenant here with matters like the greatest commandment, cautions as part of the original covenant against disobedience, how they are a chosen and special people with many special blessings--the awesome things that God has done and will do among them, the promise of continued blessings part of the covenant, perhaps the easiest to itemize as part of the covenant as near the end of his life Moses again renews the covenant as recorded in Deuteronomy 29-34.

9-2: Old covenant between God and Israel of Deuteronomy 29-34.

The part I like is as Moses reminds this second generation {the first generation out of Egypt died after 40 years of unbelief, then the second generation--those 19 years of age and older wandered 40 more years in the wilderness, and poor 'ole Moses was now 120 years old (Deut 31:2)} of both how God rescued them from bondage and cared for them in the wilderness. We remember the blessings of guidance by fire and cloud, the daily food from manna and quail; but most generally we do not recall how this second generation labored through the wilderness without their clothes or sandals "wearing out". (Deut 29:5) {While you do not necessarily see "material prosperity" here, you did see all that God ever really promises and that is "daily prosperity and security", reminding us of how Jesus later would teach in the Sermon on the Mount, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things--as clothing, daily bread and other food, personal security and care--will be given unto you."}

"All of you stand today before the LORD your God..." (Deut 29), Moses addresses this second generation with a few leftovers from the first like Caleb and Joshua, reminding them "Therefore keep the words of this covenant, and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do..." (30:9) {once again while not a gospel of wealth, it is a gospel of daily needs}. It is a Coventry for all there that day: leaders, tribes, elders, officers, all men of Israel, little ones and wives, and strangers in the camp that cut wood and draw water "...that you may enter into covenant with the LORD your God, and into His oath, which the LORD your God makes with you today." {It is sometimes called a reaffirmation of the covenant that was originally ratified by all of Israel.}

(1). As aspect of the covenant, renewed with this second generation of the wilderness, is "that He may establish you today as a people for Himself" (29:13); and the corollary, "that He may be a God to you".

(2) God has spoken this covenant to this second generation of the wilderness even as He swore to their forefathers of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (29:13), so that to be thorough we would have to go behind Mount Sinai in history to these founding fathers to find out about the covenant. However, I think we can find much of it in the review of 29-34 of Moses.

(3). The covenant agreement contained "the blessing and the curse" (30:1). They will rebel against him, Moses specifically predicts that as with Word from God as much as knowing what they did in the wilderness; and when recipients of the curse of the covenant, that is when the people of captivity recall to mind the blessing and the curse "among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you" {God directs history in that He is in the drivers seat, later using Assyria and Babylon to curse a rebellious and disobedient people}, and return to God, obeying God according to all the commandments of God reviewed that day, and reviewed ever 7 years at the Feast of the Tabernacles, "with all your hear and with all your soul", that

God in turn will bring the blessings of: (a) back from captivity; (b) return His compassion to them; (c) gather you again from all the nations where God has scattered you {here the driver is the scattered}, and it does not matter how far they are scattered, God will bring them back; (d) back to the land of your fathers; (e) you will repossess the land; (f) God will prosper you {once again it is a daily need prospering}; (g) cause your population to be more than your forefathers; and (g) God will "circumcise your heart and the hear of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all you soul, that you may live" (30:6), so that amazement of all amazement in the original renewing of the covenant and well before Jeremiah and Ezekiel, we have the "circumcision of the heart", the taking away of the stony heart, and the heart to do the Law. **{What we find is that aspects of the old covenant as it is renewed, at least in the history analysis of the future, includes a promise of the everlasting covenant of a righteousness of faith, though those word are not here used, however the words of the new heart and new mind are used.}**

(4). God will put all the curses on enemies, those who hate the people of God, and those who persecute them (30:7).

(5). Further blessings of the covenant: (a) abundance in the work of their hands; (b) abundance for children, the fruit of their bodies; (c) bless the number of their livestock and the produce of their land "for good", once again the implication is for daily and according to their need bread.

(6). Part of the covenant is to obey the voice of God, keeping all His commands and statutes "which are written in the Book of the Law", once again with "all your heart and with all your soul." (30:10)

(7). The covenant sets before the people of God "life and good, death and evil" (30:15).

(8). If your heart turns away so that you do not hear--and we think of the Prophets telling of later "blindness" and lack of sight--"are drawn away", worship other gods and serving them: (a) "you shall surely perish" (30:18); and (b) "you shall not prolong your days in the land which your cross over the Jordan to go in and possess". So that there was little lack of understanding among this second generation of what would be expected of them in the promised land.

"I call heaven and earth as witnesses," Moses continued, "today against you, that I have set before you life and earth, blessing and cursing; therefore chose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days {we are again reminded of the how to see good days and a long life of II Peter}; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them." **{If you have never seen some of the full implications of the Promised Land, you see it here, promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and with conditions.}** (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)

### 9-3: God predicts Rebellion in the Land.

God called for an inauguration of Joshua as a leader at the Tabernacle, God Himself appeared in a cloud at the entrance to the Tabernacle and spoke, God Himself therefore predicting the Rebellion in the land against the Covenant.

**“And the LORD said to Moses: ‘Behold, you will rest with your fathers {recall that Jesus and Moses talked on the mount of transfiguration}; and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go to be among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them.” (Deuteronomy 31:16)**

(1). God’s people in the Promised Land in the future will play the harlot with foreign gods; (2) God’s people will forsake God; (c) God’s people will break the covenant that God made with those people.

**1. What God will do when the His covenanted people of His day break the covenant in the above manner: (a) harlotry, recall this is the message especially of Hosea; (b) forsake God in favor of idols; and (c) break the covenant?**

(1). God’s anger will be aroused against them; and what we will want to look at in all the Prophets are those times when the anger of God is aroused.

(2). God will forsake them, hiding his face from them; and consequently in the natural and directed events of history “they will be devoured”. We think of how in the period of the Judges, there were those up and down times when the enemies within the borders devoured them like the Philistines; and then beyond in the time of Isaiah and the other Writing Prophets, how the devourers were the Assyrians and the Babylonians.

(3). So many evils will come upon them in these days of rebellion against the covenant that the people will say, “Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?” (Deut 31:17) Likewise in the Writing Prophets we will look for such signs in the Writing Prophets, we do know that Daniel recognized the fate of his people in Babylonian Captivity as “God is not among us”, of the people themselves asking the question. Many times they did not; increasing through the Old Testament they did not; and we will look rather at the reaction of the people, and excuses, as these some many evils came upon them.

**2. God instructed Moses to write down the Song of Moses as a witness of this future rebellion, predicted by God Himself--once again we see the wisdom in James’ remark at the great Jerusalem conference of how “known unto God are all His works from the beginning”.**

(1). When in the land of milk and honey that God brings them to, the people will grow fat, then they will turn to other gods, serve them, forsake God, and break “My covenant”. (31:20)

(2). This people will not be able to forget the witness of these predictions from God, as it will be written down in the Song of Moses and taught to descendants, even when the “many evils and troubles have come upon them”. (31:21) Interesting that God wants in Moses, and in a written song from Moses, a witness that He told them beforehand of what would happen.

(3). God, like Moses, also knows “the inclination of their behavior”, shown in the wilderness before God even gave them the Promised Land (31:21). “Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel.” (31:22) And then the record says, Moses inaugurated Joshua to lead the people.

#### **9-4: Moses wrote in the Song of Moses of the Rebellion in the Land.**

Moses wrote the Song of Moses, about the future rebellion of Israel, and spoke it in the hearing of all of the assembly of Israel. (Deut 31:30)

(1). In the introduction to the Song, Moses extols the Greatness of God: perfect, a Rock, of perfect works, a justice of all His ways, truth, righteous, and Upright. (32:1-4)

(2). Then Moses sings of a corrupted people of God, “a perverse and crooked generation”, because of the way they dealt with the God who bought them, made them, and established them (32:5,6). **{At this point in the Song we can not tell if Moses is talking about the sins of the last two generations in the wilderness, or of a person singing the song in the future when he will be talking about the sins of the people of the days of the Judges, Kings, or Writing Prophets; but this latter case is verified to be so as we read in 7-9 of how the younger generations will look back to “consider the years of many generations”.**}

(3). The Song goes back many, many generations to Adam and the sons of Adam, where God sets the boundaries of the nations giving Himself a land and a people, Jacob being the place “of His inheritance”. **{Once again we see God as the Great Maker of History, early in history setting the boundaries for all the nations, and choosing a boundary for Israel, that is Jacob whose name was changed to Israel by God.}** (32:7-9)

(4). How God blessed Jacob and his kin (32:10-14).

(5). How Jerusalem “grew fat and kicked”, that is how they will grow fat and kick: (a) Forsaking the God who made them; (b) Scornfully treating the Rock of His salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ; (c) Provoke God to jealousy with foreign gods, and with abominations of worship to these idols; (d) how they will sacrifice to demons rather than to the God, indeed when worship, service, and abominable acts are committed to an idol, since there is really no other gods and since the only other supernatural being who also opposes all that is God and good, then it is a sacrifice to Satan and his fallen angels; (e) they will sacrifice in the land to gods that their forefathers did not know, new arrivals.

(6). God did, or will in the future in response to this rebellion against the covenant, spurn them (32:19); God will hide His face from His covenant people (32:20); and then God would decide their end.

(7). They, God's people of the future and in the land, will become "a perverse generation", and God will decide that they are "Children in whom is no faith". (32:20) {Ah, we see how important faith is to God even as Moses states here for future generations to hear in the singing of the Song of Moses; and we begin to understand more what Jesus meant when He told the religious leaders of His day to do the "weightier matters of the law--justice, mercy, and faith." In other words, all along in the Law of Moses was faith and righteousness by faith the weightier matters of the law.}

(8). At that future point in history, according to this Song of Moses (32:21), God has been provoked to jealousy by what is not even a God; their idols have moved God to anger; and God will pass the judgment, already concluded though still to happen in the future, that God "will move them to anger by a foolish nation". {Oh how the Hebrews must have, after the power of the kingdom of David and after the wisdom of Solomon, and with the great Temple to God of Jerusalem, must have been angered as they sat in the captivity of Assyria and Babylon.} And it really appears here in 32:22 that the anger of God has gone beyond any punishment on Israel only, to a worldwide punishment of all unbelievers, Jews and Gentiles, to the fire that is kindled by His wrath, a fire which burns to the lowest hell, a fire that will consume all the earth as it increases, a fire that will go to the destruction of the very foundation of the mountains.

(9). And we must see in 32:23-27 from the Prophet Moses in his Song of Moses, like most of the other Writing Prophets, a more immediate "disaster" from God on the people of His covenant and then a continued disaster, more distant, and of the same nature: (a) God will heap disasters on them; (b) God will send arrows against them; (c) God will bring hunger on them; (d) God will allow them to be "devoured" by pestilence and bitter destruction; (e) God will send the teeth of beasts against them, use thinking of Joel with the locusts and the army later which is like locusts; and (f) God will make the memory of them to cease among men.

(10). How inevitable this punishment for breaking of the covenant will be is seen in that Moses and God through Moses treat it as if it has already happened in history, which of course, at this point it had not!

**"For the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things to come hasten upon them." (Deuteronomy 32:35b from the Song of Moses)**

(11). I can not help, parenthetically as Moses does here in the Song, mention ways in which God intervenes in the history of individuals and nations (32:39) (a) God kills and God makes alive {blessed be the name of God, and let God be God in our minds and He is in heaven and the universe, as He will be at the end of this

world}; (b) God wounds and God heals; and (c) God renders vengeance to His enemies, and God repays those who hate Him.

(12). Well, we have our question about the Gentiles being answered, that is at the time mentioned in Scripture as recipients of salvation, as we read some of the last words of the Song (32:43), how: (a) "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people"--an obvious reference to the remnant of Gentiles who will rejoice with the remnant of the rest of God's people in the Jewish nation; (b) God will revenge the blood of all His servants, Jews and Gentiles; (c) God will get even, and more, against His adversaries, Satan and all unbelievers; (d) God will provide "atonement" (here in Moses and the Law of Moses years before the New Testament, we see "atonement", knowing what we do from the NT to be the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross for the sins of the world; and (e) that this atonement is for the land as well as the people, being aware and conditioned as we are by the context that precedes, we know this to be the land of the whole world, that is a new earth when God destroys by this increased fire the old earth. Even as we use, according to the directions from God, all of the NT scriptures to interpret the Law of Moses with the covenant {"no scripture is of any private interpretation"}, even so will be use the Writing Prophets and what they said on the covenant to interpret the covenant.

### 9-5: History of the Hebrews and Jews in Romans.

You know no one on earth had the knowledge and perspective to deal with the history of his own people than Paul, a Hebrew of the Hebrews and trained in the Law as a lawyer, knowledgeable on Scriptures beyond all in his generation; and then after conversion with the proper perspective from the Ascended Christ in Arabia to fully understand.

**1. In Romans where Paul uses many OT quotes, it is not incidental, rather as almost a subject introduction of what he did in his reread of the OT after conversion, that the quote comes from Habakkuk, "the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17 and Habakkuk 2:4).**

Also indicative of the discussion to come in Romans, the most thorough of all books of the NT on God's salvation plan, is the prior mention of the "Gospel of Christ" for those who believe, Jews first and then Greeks; nor the next phrase of how the gospel, OT and NT, is "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith". You will recall as we will find later in Romans that "Abraham believed God and it was imputed to him for righteousness"; so that faith and righteousness by faith was a way of salvation from the beginning and all through the Law and the Prophets. Where we have a problem today and then is in the obvious difference between "God's people" in a very general sense and a remnant of that larger group that are really God's people through faith. {It would almost seem, and I say this respectfully, that God had set aside then in the nation of Israel and now in the church memberships of the United States a larger group from which He can select His elect

based on their faith for righteousness. I know the problem of the falling away in the wilderness where all of those called "God's people", all the children of Israel rescued from Egypt by God, were denied eternal rest and entrance into the promised land except for Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Caleb, and all young people 19 years of age and younger, and the current falling away of churchmembers in the United States is not this simple: however as we are informed in Hebrews, the book of the Falling Away, in both cases there must be among those calling themselves by the name of God and by the name of His Christ, "an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." } In the past it would bother me when I would hear such statements as the one made by Prime Minister Begin when he said, "We are born Jews like you Americans are born Christians." But you know when I consider the way God first chose Israel to occupy His land, and then chose the United States to occupy this land; and blessed them as long as there was a keeping of the covenants with God, there is a real sense in which Americans are born Christians in that they are "God's people" like the majority of Israel was God's people. In other words in both nations, only a remnant and sometimes as in Malachi a remnant of the remnant went beyond a mouth and lip acknowledgment of God to a faith unto righteousness.

2. What Paul describes in Romans 1:18-32, in particular for heathen civilizations, is also a description of how people, God's people or otherwise, inherently know something about God yet refused to glorify Him as God and then the spiral downward among those peoples happens as "an evil heart of unbelief" takes its toll.

What we might say is different in God's people of the Hebrew nation, in God's Gentile people of the United States, and in God's creations in the rest of the world--where "God is manifest" inside them, where God shows it to them, where His eternal power and Godhead are seen in terms of the obvious creations from God--is the time it takes to go from a little initial knowledge of God to an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. I think you could safely call it in all cases a certain measure of faith, more in the category of the faith that is a mental assent and can not save of James than of faith that leads to righteousness; and I know men like Frank Graham as he did in his message on "Grace" where he claims a measure of faith for all men and grace, would object to both this measure dying with time, and object to the individual heart among his own church members who would depart all the way to the other extreme of "an evil heart of unbelief". Yet the message of the Bible, and of Hebrews, is that this very thing did happen to the Hebrew nation in the wilderness, and that it is repeated in the Falling Away of the Fullness of Times Gentiles, the leader of course of which is the United States.

3. The Hebrew nation, later the Jewish nation, blasphemed the name of God across the world, because other nations looked down on their God as impotent and unloving when God had to punish them with captivity because of their rebellions.

Paul supports this with a quote from Isaiah 52:5 and Ezekiel 36:22 in Romans 2:24, "For 'the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,' as it is written." Also Daniel in making his very effective prayer for "what will happen to my people" after the 70 years in captivity of Jeremiah (Daniel 9:1-19), compares what nations think during his time of Israel and Israel's God because of rebellion and captivity as the opposite of how God's name became respected among the nations of the world when He rescued His people from Egyptian bondage.

(1). Isaiah 52:5.

In the larger context of Isaiah 52, what we have is some of the immediate hope for the future, in salvation, in restoration of a remnant of the people of Jerusalem, in the suffering servant which is the Prophet Messiah. All know of what 52 leads into in Isaiah 53 as the crucifixion of the Christ is clearly taught, "the bruised for our iniquities", the stripes of His with which we are healed, and other details of the Crucifixion that we must look at as part of the Message of Hope. **{By the way, we have in Isaiah 52:4 and following a little history from God Himself.}**

"For thus says the LORD God: 'My people **{well there it is, God Himself is calling the nation of Israel "God's people}** went down at first into Egypt to dwell there **{at this time it was simple the large family of Jacob, called Israel blessed by the position in Egyptian government by his son Joseph, one of the forefathers of the 12 tribes of Israel}**; then the Assyrians oppressed them without cause **{well, the Assyrians are still held responsible although God used them to punish Israel}**. Now therefore, what have I here, ' says the LORD, that My people are taken away for nothing? Those who rule over them make them wail,' says the LORD, and My name is blasphemed continually every day. Therefore My people shall know My name **{it would seem that some of the blasphemy was not only that the Captors did not know the full implications of the name of the LORD God, nor did God's own people know}**; therefore they shall know in that day that I am He who speaks. **{Well, this is one thing that all did not know about God, that He is the God who speaks to nations and individuals.}**: Behold, it is I.'" (Isaiah 52:4-6) **{How does God speak to men, always through either an Apostle or Prophet! And God does not do anything, according to the Prophets, without first telling His people; of course, then and today, there are those who do not see or listen, who cry peace in the temple or the church, peace, peace in the nation when there is no foundation any longer for peace in the church or the nation.}**

(3). Ezekiel 36:22.

"When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name--when they said to them, 'These are the people of the LORD, and yet they have gone out of His land.'" But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went. Therefore

say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: 'I do not do this for you sake, O house of Israel {it seems that God is on the very age, at least after the birth and death and ascension of His Christ to forsaking the nation of Israel, which we know to be predicted in Daniel; however, the foreshadowing in the other Prophets, a time of blindness for the Jews until the Fullness of the Gentiles is complete.}, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD,' says the Lord GOD, 'when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.'" (Ezekiel 36:20-24)

(a) Next God promises to bring them from among the other nations into "your own land" (36:24); (b) the famous promise of regeneration with "a new heart and a new spirit"; (c) They will dwell in the land, be God's people and He will be their God, in which we must recognize both an immediate and an eternal implication of hope; for we know that the Jews only remained in the land until 70 A.D. and recently returned.

#### 4. What is a Jew? Romans 2:28,29.

Paul is here making preparation for declaring what was hinted at in the Writing Prophets, that a Gentile can be a Jew in the sense of being a real people of God.

"For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly {with all due respect former Prime Minister Begin and others in Israel, it is not enough to have outward social, political, and even religious claims to be a Jew, and you can not according to the definition in the Word of God be born a Jew}, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly {wow, contemporary Israel have you imagined that a Palestinian believer in Jesus might be more inwardly a Jew than you are, or even a Gentile American believer}; and circumcision is that of the heart {try, Israel the circumcision of the heart}, in the Spirit {yes, try the Holy Spirit}, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God {let God identify the real Jews for you.} (Romans 2:28,29)

#### 5. What good is it then to be a Jew or to be circumcised? Romans 3:1.

"Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God" (Romans 3:2)

#### 6. What if the majority of God's people in the OT and in the times of Jesus and the Apostles did not believe?

"For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?" (Romans 3:3)

As we read the Writing Prophets of the OT, with the more depressing aspects of the Message than the good, we should focus more on the faithfulness of God, His

character, and His Word, than on the majority unbelief of the Hebrew nations; recalling that Jesus Himself was of that nation, the prime oracle of God, as were the first Apostles who wrote Scriptures; and for a few years after the Ascension, the Jews were the majority of Christians. Of course, Paul called himself a "Hebrew of the Hebrews" more proud of that, it seems, than of his Roman citizenship.