

A Look at the Big Picture

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Over the years as I've meditated on God's word, I have wondered what is the purpose? What is God accomplishing? What is the big picture? I know many have wondered the same. Many have marvelled at the intricacies—the smallest elements—that are the building blocks of the physical creation. Others wonder, why is there a massive universe that is constantly expanding? Whether we are looking at the creation from a micro or macro perspective, there is much that is beyond our capacity to comprehend. What is God doing? Why has He created humans who are obviously unlike any other creature that we are aware of. For nearly 100 years—that I'm aware of—the modern churches of God have understood that God is creating a family that will live with Him for eternity.

The family of God was planned from the beginning to come from the relationship of Almighty God—the only true God—and His servant, through whom everything has been created and through whom would come the entire family of God. So, what is God doing? He's not doing it alone. What God is doing, He is doing through the joint efforts of both Himself and His Servant, who as part of the plan, became His Son. Turn to Isaiah 9:6, prophetically talking about Jesus Christ. Mark Sappington, in a sermon given November 23 of last year, explained this verse—which has been often misunderstood because translations are misleading and they do not correctly reflect the Hebrew grammatical sense of the verse. The New King James translation of Isaiah 9:6.

Isaiah 9:6 *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* (NKJV)

In review—what Mark explained—he explained that the second sentence of this verse is mistranslated as a passive voice sentence. The tense of the verb translated “called” in English is active voice and not passive voice. He explained that all the attributes of the latter part of the verse, except the phrase “Prince of peace”, reference our heavenly Father as the subject performing the action of calling the object of the sentence the Prince of Peace. The meaning of the second sentence is that God our Father will call Jesus by His name—the Prince of Peace. Mark explained that a more accurate translation into the English would read (part of this is Mark's translation):

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulder. And the counseling wonder, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, will call His name the Prince of Peace”.

That was a translation that Mark Sappington presented to us.

My copy of the Stone edition of the Tanach—a translation by Jewish scholars—confirms Mark's translation. As a note, the verse number for this verse in the Tanach is verse 5.

The Stone edition of the Tanach translation of this verse reads as: (Isaiah 9:5 in the Tanach)

“For a child has been born to us, a Son has been given to us, and the dominion will rest on His shoulder”.

This portion of the verse matches both the New King James Version and Mark Sappington’s translation. The second portion of this verse matches the sense of Mark Sappington’s translation. The Tanach reads as:

“The wondrous advisor, mighty God, Eternal Father, called His name Sar Shalom, [in brackets in that Bible it says, Prince of Peace.]

An eternal Father is one who will forever be a Father. An eternal Father of His Son will always be greater than the Son. The eternal Father is also a wondrous advisor and mighty God. Verse 7 of Isaiah 9 continues with the eternal Father declaring that:

Isaiah 9:7 *Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. (NKJV)*

The two are working together. The eternal Father is superior to His Son and is recognized in these two verses as assigning His Son the responsibility of dominion and rule. According to Isaiah 9 there will be no end to the increase of that government. What is being accomplished is a team effort. The growth of what they are doing will go on into perpetuity. The eternal Father has an eternal Son. From the time of the Son’s birth, the eternal Father has had an eternal Son. Christ existed before that, but at the time of His birth, He became an eternal Son, so He will always be His Son. In Revelation 22—the last chapter of the Bible—verse 5 says that the two of them will rule and reign forever.

According to this verse—Isaiah 9:7—we see that the increase or fruit of His government and peace will increase forever and then finishing the verse:

7 continued) ... The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (NKJV0

The LORD of hosts is Yehovah, Yehovah is God Almighty. Jesus will rule with judgment and justice under the authority and power of Almighty God, the LORD of Hosts, Yehovah. Whatever it is that they are doing—verses 6 and 7—indicates they will continue doing it into perpetuity; even forever. Accomplishments of their objectives will continue and last forever.

As mentioned, what God is doing is producing a family. The growth of that family will continue forever. I hope to demonstrate that He is accomplishing His goal through a 2-phase approach. These 2 phases were determined and planned for from before time began. Before the creation of the world, He had the plan formulated. The goal has always been to have a family of spirit beings endowed with—among others—freedom of

thought, freedom of expression and actions. Proven ability to coexist in love and truth while focusing on accomplishment. Jesus gave us the example of focusing on accomplishment within the constraints of not straying outside the bounds of God's will.

John 5:25 *Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.*

26) For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,

27) and has given Him authority to execute judgment... (NKJV)

Executing judgment is the ability to make decisions. Jesus is given the authority to make decisions of eternal importance.

27 continued) ... also, because He is the Son of Man.

28) Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice

29) and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. (NKJV)

Jesus will be making decisions that directly impact the Almighty God's plans. He continues in verse 30 describing His constraints. His decisions will be in compliance with God's goals. Jesus says, in verse 30.

30) I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. (NKJV)

Jesus is given freedom of judgment but He says He will not use that freedom to stray from Almighty God's intent. Almighty God gave responsibility to Jesus because He trusted Him to exercise the authority given to Him with righteousness in compliance with God's plans. Jesus went on to chastise the Jews for their failure to recognize His authority and instead of supporting His efforts, they were doing what they could to hinder His accomplishments. Their actions and comments demonstrated hypocrisy. In their minds, they thought God would have sent someone else more acceptable to them. Someone maybe more like them—not Jesus. They should have recognized that He was doing the work of God the Father. They, for a time, had heard the witness of John the Baptist. That should have substantiated who Jesus was. Jesus says, in verse 36:

36) But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.

37) And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. (NKJV)

They were not accepting God's word; they were not hearing it. They didn't understand. They actually had the word of God, which they ignored. They chose to reject what God had presented for them.

38) But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.

39) You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

40) But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. (NKJV)

So, they rejected Christ. They were unwilling to coexist with Christ in His efforts to serve God. Their attitudes and actions beget division and confusion, the opposite of peace.

41) I do not receive honor from men.

42) But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.

43) I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.

44) How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God? (NKJV)

The nature of God's goals requires His children to develop righteous character, which is needed for peaceful coexistence. God's children, following Christ's example, will support the accomplishment of God's goals.

John 6:38 *For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. (NKJV)*

In Romans 15, Jesus had strength of character. He had the knowledge and understanding of God's will. He understood human nature and our natural weaknesses. These are things we need to learn.

Romans 15:3 *For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." (NKJV)*

The record of the trials that Jesus had to endure for our benefit and the record of the successes and failures of others in the scriptures are for our benefit.

4) For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

5) Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus ... (NKJV)

So, we must develop in ourselves attitudes of service and love toward one another, toward Jesus Christ and God the Father.

6) that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (NKJV)

Peace and productivity are fruits of strong moral character. Contending and resisting evil is difficult. Through the process, the goals are that we gain strength of character. With strength of character, we have hope of being born children of God.

Romans 5:3 *And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;
4) and perseverance, character; and character, hope. (NKJV)*

Character is developed over time through education and experience. Education and experience must include an understanding and ability to discern between evil character and righteous character.

James 1:2 *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,
3) knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.
4) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (NKJV)*

Continuing in verse 12) ...

12) Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (NKJV)

The Eternal's "spirit children" of God will have the ability to discern and choose righteous character. They will be forever faithful and loyal to Almighty God. Our goal must be to develop proper character that is pleasing to God.

Psalms 34:12 *Who is the man who desires life, And loves many days, that he may see good?
13) Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit.
14) Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.
15) The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their cry. (NKJV)*

Righteous character does require effort. Those who fail to develop righteous character and decide to do evil, will be destroyed.

16) The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. (NKJV)

So righteous character is not automatically developed. Humans must have the opportunity to see and experience wickedness and rebellion against God. Only through experience and observation can humans learn to properly discern and choose righteousness over evil. Not everyone will repent of their wickedness. The law results in condemnation. Transgression of the law requires death.

Romans 5:20 *Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. (NKJV)*

The word *offense* means “contradiction to the law”. *Contradiction to the fruit of the law* is “wickedness”. *Offense to the law* is the opposite to *the principles of the law*. The law sets a line by which wickedness can be identified and has opportunity to grow. To abound means to develop to its fullest; develop to its fullest potential. Because of the law, sin is defined and clearly identifiable. God has determined that the penalty for sin is death. He then provided for a Redeemer to pay that penalty on behalf of the sinner. Because the penalty is paid, God then declared that He would choose to sift out of humanity, those that He would allow to become His children.

Continuing in verse 20) ...

*20 continued) ... But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,
21) so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through
righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (NKJV)*

God's grace will produce greater results than the loss from rebellion and wickedness. The choice of who will enjoy the privilege of God's compassion and grace is totally up to God's discretion.

Romans 9:15 *For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.”
16) So then, it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. (NKJV)*

There was never a plan where the end game was physical flesh and blood perfection without the possibility of sin. God's plan included an allowance for evil to flourish. Part of God's plan was to make sure that there were evil individuals that He will reject because of their wickedness. An example is Pharaoh of Egypt. Continuing in verse 17.

17) For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.”

18) Therefore, He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

For us, this may seem harsh and unfair to those who have their hearts hardened. Their rebellion led to their condemnation and destruction. That very question is asked in the next verse.

19) You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?” (NKJV)

The answer is basically; God is in charge. He is the Creator. The plan being implemented by God is His plan. We must have faith in His wisdom, just as Jesus said, not His will but God's will be done. This does not preclude us to entreating God for His

mercy and reconsideration. For example, Jesus asked for God's reconsideration when He asked if the cup of His crucifixion might be modified. It turned out it could not. Jesus submitted to Almighty God's will.

20) But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?"

21) Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

22) What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,

23) and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,

24) even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?
(NKJV)

If we have God's Holy Spirit, we are the *vessels of mercy*. Our physical bodies are temporary and are the human vessels of either God's mercy or His wrath. There is a difference between physical and spirit. The entire purpose of God's plan is for "spirit children" to be born into His family. Those who are the vessels of mercy are those in this flesh who are or will be chosen to inherit eternal life. The training ground for the development of holy and righteous character is in this flesh. This flesh must be put off before we can be born into God's family by resurrection from the dead to eternal life as a "spirit child" of God.

The Apostle Paul, in verses 25 and 26 gives us a key for understanding the eternal continuity of God's plan. Of character development that is required in the flesh. The Apostle Paul references the book of Hosea. Romans 9:25 where he references the book of Hosea.

25) As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved."

26) And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God.'" (NKJV)

Sons of the living God are the same as those in verse 23 and 24 who are the *vessels of mercy*. They are flesh and blood humans who are given the opportunity for begetting by God's Holy Spirit through Christ. The phrase "my people" is a term used throughout the Bible primarily to represent the people with whom God made covenant at Sinai. In Hosea 1, notice the story referenced by Paul of what is being described in Hosea. The book of Hosea compares Israel's unfaithfulness to God to the unfaithfulness of a harlot in a marriage. God required Hosea to take a harlot as a wife and have a child through her. The wickedness of being unfaithful through harlotry was being illustrated through Hosea's marriage to Gomer. In Hosea 1:1.

Hosea 1:1 *The word of the LORD that came to Hosea the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.*

2) *When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea: "Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry And children of harlotry, For the land has committed great harlotry By departing from the LORD."*

3) *So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.*

4) *Then the LORD said to him: "Call his name Jezreel ... (NKJV)*

The name *Jezreel* in Hebrew means "seeded by God". Notice the first child conceived by Gomer was Hosea's son.

Continuing in verse 6) ...

6) *And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then God said to him: "Call her name Lo-Ruhamah, For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, But I will utterly take them away. (NKJV)*

This child is not recognized as Hosea's daughter in the same way as Jezreel was. Notice the name Lo-Ruhamah. Her name is a hyphenated word. *Ruhamah* means "mercy is shown". But when preceded by the prefix "lo" which means no, the meaning of her name is "not pitied". Her name was intended for her to represent the people of Israel and that they would no longer fall under God's mercy. God was informing through His prophet, that Israel would no longer experience God's mercy and pity in their trials.

Continuing in verse 8) ...

8) *Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son.*

9) *Then God said: "Call his name Lo-Ammi, For you are not My people, And I will not be your God. (NKJV)*

Ammi means "my people" therefore *lo-Ammi* means "not my people". Notice this son is not listed as a son of Hosea. Gomer was a harlot and unfaithful to Hosea just as Israel was being unfaithful to God. She represented God's rejection of Israel for harlotry. Israel would no longer be pitied. God's mercy was being withdrawn from Israel. Both Lo-Ammi and Lo-Ruhamah represented God's rejection of the people of Israel because they were illegitimate fruit of His covenant with Israel. The illegitimate children of Gomer's harlotry represented the people of Israel.

On the other hand, Jezreel, the son fathered by Hosea, represented exemption of illegitimate fruit of Gomer's conception and faithfulness as a type of God accepting His sons delivered in faithfulness and bearing the fruit of righteous character.

Continuing in verse 10) ...

10) Yet the number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. (NKJV)

Even though God is rejecting Israel, He is reconfirming His promise to Abram, Jacob, and Joseph. Even though Israel is being rejected, they will multiply and are not being permanently rejected as a nation. Continuing in verse 10 He makes an added promise.

10 continued) ... And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There it shall be said to them, 'You are sons of the living God.' (NKJV)

He calls them *the sons of the living God*. Being *sons of the living God* was not the promise to Jacob and Joseph. This event referenced in Romans 9:26, *sons of the living God* are children of God to be resurrected to eternal life. When resurrected, they will no longer be flesh and blood; they will be spirit. This is a different promise to what was made to the house of Jacob in the beginning. Verse 11, speaking of physical children.

11) Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel Shall be gathered together, and appoint for themselves one head; And they shall come up out of the land. For great will be the day of Jezreel! (NKJV)

Jezreel, God's seed. The timing of these events is critical for our understanding. The day or time of this event is when the children of Judah and the children of Israel will have God's Holy Spirit. This is apparent because the name *Jezreel* in Hebrew means "seeded by God". Receiving God's Holy Spirit is a begetting. *Sons of the living God* are children of God, a family relationship. Descendants of Judah and Israel are those who are by covenant, God's people and by covenant, Yehovah was their God. The original covenant was not a family relationship. Jezreel was a legitimate son. In chapter 2, God declares that He will not have mercy on the fruit of Gomer's harlotry. The description of Gomer's unfaithfulness illustrates the pain and suffering of the children of Jacob for their unfaithfulness to God.

The pain of punishment and the fruit of unfaithfulness will eventually, hopefully, bring repentance. In Hosea 2:13 God says that He will punish her for the days of the Baal's to which she burned incense. In verse 14 He will speak comfort to her.

Continuing in chapter 2:19) ...

Hosea 2:19 *I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me In righteousness and justice, In lovingkindness and mercy;*
20) I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the LORD. (NKJV)

Notice that there is a change in the mindset of Israel. The change is an attitude of true commitment and faithfulness—an attitude of love. This is a change of heart for Israel.

21) It shall come to pass in that day That I will answer," says the LORD; "I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth.

22) The earth shall answer with grain, with new wine, and with oil; They shall answer Jezreel. (NKJV)

Jezreel, seeded by God, means they will become children of God and be prosperous.

23) Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth, And I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy; Then I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' And they shall say, 'You are my God!'" (NKJV)

The change of heart here is significant. The result is that a people rejected by God now becomes His people. What does it mean, *you are My people*? In Exodus 3 God is talking to Moses and commissioned him to go to Pharaoh. He was sent to Pharaoh to begin the process of rescuing the children from the Egyptians. Here in verse 10, God identifies the children of Israel as His people.

Exodus 3:10 *Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."* (NKJV)

So My people—the children of Israel—so clearly the children of Israel are God's people.

Exodus 6:6 *Therefore say to the children of Israel: I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.*

7) I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. (NKJV)

Let's continue in Exodus 19. In Exodus 19 the children of Israel are in the wilderness of Sinai camped before the mountain. God is in the final process of making a formal covenant with Israel that will be binding on them and their children forever.

Exodus 19:5 *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.*

6) And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." (NKJV)

As we saw in the book of Hosea, they did not continue to obey God and they did not keep His commandments. The result was that God declared that they were no longer His people. God eventually rejected and banished all of Israel from the land He had given them. Essentially all of the children of Jacob were removed. So, the fall was not the terms of the agreement or with God. The problem was with the people of Israel

because they did not have the heart to perceive the magnificence of their covenant with God. They lacked the ability to appreciate what God had given them.

Deuteronomy 29:4 *Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day. (NKJV)*

The people of Israel didn't have the heart to be able to understand. They were unable to understand exactly what was being offered and what the potential was. 1 Corinthians 2 explains what is needed for a human to have the capacity to understand spiritual knowledge. The ability to understand the commandments and the significance of God's covenant with Israel can only happen through God's Holy Spirit. The information is available but cannot be understood without God's personal influence.

1 Corinthians 2:9 *But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*

10) But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

11) For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

[Remember the example was given freely by God to Israel—a covenant.]

13) These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14) But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (NKJV)

Without a heart to perceive the magnificence of their calling, the physical nation of Israel could not successfully be pleasing to God. They were doomed to fail. Their inevitable failure was known by God from the beginning. Their failure was intended to be an example forever to all the world. God rejected Israel as we saw in Hosea. Israel was no longer His people because of unfaithfulness. But we also saw in Hosea and the book of Romans that they would become His people again. When they become His people again, they will be under a better covenant. That new covenant is briefly described in Hebrews 8.

Hebrews 8:7 *For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.*

8) Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— (NKJV)

Notice this new covenant is with the house of Judah and the house of Israel. These are the descendants that the old covenant was made with.

9) not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. (NKJV)

We saw this in Romans 9 with a more detailed description in the book of Hosea. Because they were unfaithful, God declared that they were not His people and He would no longer have mercy on them.

Continuing in verse 10) ...

10) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (NKJV)

What was missing from the first covenant at Sinai was that they did not have the promise of God's Holy Spirit. Without God's Holy Spirit, they could not truly know God.

*11) None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD, for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.
12) For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.' (NKJV)*

God's mercy references back to Hosea 2 where instead of *Lo-Ruhamah* it will be *Ruhamah* which means "mercy is shown".

13) In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. (NKJV)

What is becoming obsolete is the old covenant which did not include receipt of God's Holy Spirit. They did not have God's law in their minds and written on their hearts. The upgrade from the first covenant with Israel will require the addition of the Holy Spirit. What was lacking was God's Holy Spirit. This upgraded covenant with Israel will happen after the return of Jesus to resurrect the Firstfruits and after God Almighty has returned and put down all rebellion. We are the *called-out ones* of the Jews and Gentiles that we saw in Romans 9:24. We are the ones who must take care not to boast about having God's Holy Spirit available to us now.

Romans 11:7 *What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it [Israel doesn't have God's Spirit, the elect do—we have God's Spirit], and the rest were blinded.*

8) Just as it is written: "God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day." (NKJV)

Continuing in verse 25) ...

25) For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

26) And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

27) For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins." (NKJV)

The entire process of God rejecting Israel was all part of a plan. God's plan is a plan designed to bring about the most bountiful harvest possible of children born into eternal life. Because of the way God has executed His plan, all those "born again" children have the greatest opportunity possible to develop holy, righteous character. Further evidence of this upgraded covenant with Israel and Judah can be found in Isaiah 66. Notice the timing and we'll see this—it's when all the children of Israel will be bringing offerings into the house of Yehovah.

Isaiah 66:20 *Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says the LORD, "as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. (NKJV)*

Notice it is the children of Israel who are bringing the sacrifices into the house of the LORD. They are physical descendants of Israel bringing the sacrifices.

21) And I will also take some of them for priests and Levites," says the LORD.

22) For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. (NKJV)

The time of *the new heavens and new earth* are when God's plan is extending into eternity.

23) And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD. (NKJV)

Weekly Sabbaths will continue forever, every 7 days. Months will also continue on forever. We need to be looking forward to these events and make sure we are prepared and pleasing to God.

2 Peter 3:13 *Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

14) Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; (NKJV)

So almighty God made a plan to be implemented with His servant and companion to produce a family of spirit beings permanently capable of choosing righteous character.

That Servant is Jesus Christ. He lowered Himself to become part of the creation in order to redeem all humanity from death, which is the penalty for sin. So, God's Holy Spirit given to them each in their own time, comes through Christ. God's plan requires righteous character to be developed in this flesh prior to our being born into eternal life. Being born into eternal life is to be born into the family of God. Of the growth of that family as we saw in Isaiah 9:7, there will be no end.