

In Matthew's Gospel Jesus explains that they will judge the 12 tribes of Israel. This is the hope that in the future day, God is going to restore all 12 tribes. Now, the model for that is Solomon, the son of David. The son of David reigned over 12 tribes. Solomon reigned over all 12 tribes like his father, David. Those are the only two kings in Israel's history to really reign over all 12 tribes. Perhaps Saul as well. We read:

"Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel . . ." (1 Kgs 4:20)

The son of David appointed 12 like Jesus appoints 12, the son of David. **The twelve tribes restored as descendants of lost tribes from gentiles saved through Church's ministry**

How is it then that the 12 tribes are going to be saved?

In, Romans 11, Paul says:

So that you may not claim to be wiser than you are, brothers and sisters, I want you to understand this mystery: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved. . . (Romans 9:25–26)

Why is Paul going to the Gentiles? Because Paul understands that's where 10 of the 12 tribes of Israel are.

The northern tribes were scattered to the Gentiles. Paul quotes the book of Hosea earlier in Romans. Hosea says:

As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' ...

Hosea is talking about the fact that Israel was God's people, the northern tribes. Hosea was preaching the northern tribes. The northern tribes became "not my people." They were scattered to the nations. But then, in the future day, "not my people, I will call my people."

... and her who was not beloved I will call 'my beloved'" (Hos 2:23).

"And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God'" (Hos 1:10).

Hosea is looking forward to the day God restores the northern tribes.

Paul is thinking about these passages before he writes Romans 11. Notice, he says:

"... a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved.

God knows there's an elect number of people who will be saved. They're going to come in from the Gentiles. But when "the full number of Gentiles come in, then all Israel will be saved." Some

people have taken that to mean that all the Gentiles are going to come in, and then all the Jews are going to convert. That may not be totally wrong.

When the Gentiles come in, all Israel is saved, because the Gentiles, some of them, are the descendants of the lost tribes.

Paul's point in Romans is that people who reject the Jewish people who reject the Gentiles are not being faithful to Israel. Paul is actually being faithful to Israel. He is willing to go and bring back Israel.

There's a really interesting passage by Jason Staples, a scholar who's written extensively about this. It's in Genesis 49 when Joseph has his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

[When Joseph saw that his father \[Jacob, Israel\] laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; ...](#)

Because his older son was Manasseh, and the right hand is the hand of the more prominent blessing. Joseph brings his sons to be blessed, put the older son on Jacob's right hand, and when Jacob blesses the sons he [crosses his arms] and Joseph is upset. But his father refuses to switch hands.

[... and he took his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father; for this one is the first-born; put your right hand upon his head." But his father refused, and said,](#)

He says:

["I know, my son, I know; he also shall become a people \[this other son is going to be a great people\], and he also shall be great; nevertheless his younger brother shall be greater than *he*, and his descendants shall become the fullness of the nations." \(Gen 49:17–19; LXX\)](#)

Somehow, through one of the sons of Joseph, the fullness of the nations will be realized. And that perhaps happened through the exile of the lost tribes and then the restoration in the Church. Perhaps that's what Paul has in mind. Jesus doesn't spell this out in the Gospel of Matthew. But when Jesus is talking about the restoration, the lost 12 tribes, in the background is this idea that the apostles are going to go out to the Gentiles. That's partly where the northern tribes are, so by going to the Gentiles they're also going to bring back not just Gentiles but also Israelites from the 12 tribes.

In Luke's Gospel, this saying is linked to sitting at table, because it's in the Eucharist that we're all united in Christ.