

Romans 11:25-32
The Glorious Future of Israel

A few years back, I was asked to consider taking over a Bible study that had been teaching through Romans

- I asked, “Where are you now? Where would I pick up?”
- They said, “We just began Romans 9.”

I have to be honest in saying that this would not have been ideal

- I myself had never studied Romans

Picking up a Bible study in the middle of a book like Romans could be done

- But picking up a study in chapter 9 would have been very difficult

Long story short, I didn’t lead that Bible study for several reasons

But here we are this morning

- Next week will be our last message on Romans 11

I was thinking a few weeks ago of how different my understanding of Romans is now, having taught through it

- I have such a better understanding of the overall message of the book

As a result of having taught through the entire book, I have such a better understanding of Romans 9-11

- These are the chapters of Romans that people tend to shy away from
- These chapters seem confusing to many

I trust that God has opened your eyes to understand the book of Romans a bit more because of our study together

- Our goal in preaching is not just the dispensing of facts
- Our goal in preaching is to present the truth so that you can apply it to your hearts

This morning, Paul will continue his discussions of Israel as a nation

- We will see how God is faithful to bring about His promises that were originally made to this special people

Let’s read Romans 11:25-32

Specifically, we want to look at three questions that will be answered through this morning’s message

- When will Israel be saved? (11:25)
- What part of Israel will be saved? (11:26-27)
- Why will Israel be saved? (11:28-32)

I. When will Israel be saved? (11:25)

[25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery.](#)

The apostle continues to speak to the Gentiles in this closing portion of Romans 11

- We know this by the use of the second person “**you**”
- “You” is used in contrast with “they” (11:7, 11, 20, 23, 24)

This is one of the lessons I will walk away with, having studied Romans 9-11 with you

- So often, we think of these chapters as pertaining exclusively to the Jews
- However, we learn that much of Romans 11 is written to and for the Gentiles

Paul has something that he wants to tell the Gentiles

- Something that they did not understand at the time

The phrase “**I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed**” is quite a common phrase with Paul (Rom 1:13; 1 Cor 10:1; 12:1; 2 Cor 1:8; 1 Thess 4:13)

- He uses this phrase to highlight something very important and significant¹

He uses the affectionate term “**brethren**” to signify the spiritual relationship that enjoys with these Gentile believers

The apostle wants to expound on something that he calls “**this mystery**”

- What does this term mean?

Throughout the NT, the term “**mystery**” denotes a truth that was once hidden, but has now been manifested²

- It uncovers a truth once concealed, but now is revealed

The reality is that outside of God unveiling the mystery through Paul and others, the truth would never have been known any other way

- Not through human faculty, understanding, or discovery

The Gentiles, not knowing the Old Testament as well as the Jews, could have been very ignorant of God’s future plans for Israel

- Perhaps the Gentiles thought that God had permanently blotted the Jews out of His plans
- If that’s what they thought, they were sorely mistaken

lest you be wise in your own estimation,

For the third time in this chapter alone, Paul is warning the Gentile Christians against an attitude of superiority and pride toward the Jewish people

- As if the Gentiles were now the exclusive people of God
- As if God had permanently and eternally set aside Israel as a nation
- As if there was no history for Israel³

Such an attitude would lend itself toward spiritual snobbery and pride

- In Paul’s words, the Gentile believers needed to beware lest they “**be wise in (their) own estimation**”

Church-age Gentiles need to beware lest we adopt a similar attitude toward Jews

- For that matter, lest we adopt a similar attitude toward anyone

¹ Robert H. Mounce, *NAC, Romans*, 223.

² W.H. Griffith-Thomas, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*, 303.

³ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 419.

We need to remind ourselves of the Gospel

- Remind yourself of what you were like before God saved you
- Remind yourself of what sins that enslaved you
- Remind yourself of how undeserving you were

As Robert is teaching us on Sunday evenings, spiritual pride is a constant enemy

- We need to have our guard up at all times

that a partial hardening has happened to Israel

Part of the “mystery” that Paul unveils to the Gentiles regarding Israel is that of a “partial hardening”

- This doesn't imply that every Jew was hardened partially
- Rather, it implies that some Jews were hardened completely

But this hardening on the nation of Israel is not complete

- God has always saved some individual Jews

This hardening of Israel is not permanent, either

- There will be a time of future fulfillment and joy
- And that will be a glorious future for Israel

Remember the words of Romans 11:23, “**And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again**”

But the Gentile believers needed to be on guard about this partial hardening

- It was not because the Gentiles were somehow superior or more deserving
- That was far from reality

As we have studied recently in Romans 11, it was the very rejection of the Messiah by the Jews that opened the opportunity for the Gentiles to experience the covenant blessings

- So how in the world could they be arrogant?
- How could they say that they were more deserving?

until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in:

The last part of verse 25 is the heart of the mystery for which the Gentiles had not understood

- There would be a stop to the Jewish hardening in the near future

In other words, God had not turned His back on the nation of Israel forever

- In the words of Romans 11:1, “**God has not rejected His people**”

But this raises many questions, doesn't it?

- Paul answers some of those for us here in Romans 11

The apostle says that the nation of Israel will be partially hardened “**until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in**”

- What does Paul mean by this phrase, “**the fullness of the Gentiles**”?

Similar language is used by the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Luke, “**But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart, and let not those who are in the country enter the city; because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled. Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people, and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”** (21:21-24, emphasis mine)

- Christ associates future, end times events with “**the times of the Gentiles be(ing) fulfilled**”

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says, “**this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come**” (Mt 24:14)

- Another hint is given about “**the end,**” couched in future, end times terminology

What does Paul mean by this phrase, “**the fullness of the Gentiles**”?

- Is it the same thing that Jesus meant by the phrase, “**the times of the Gentiles**”?

We are told in Acts 15:14, “**Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name**”

- Not only were the Jews considered God’s people
- The Gentiles are given that privilege as well

During the current time, many Gentiles are coming to faith in the Messiah

- There is just a remnant of the Jewish people who embrace Him

Perhaps it would help to set things in their context

- We have a tendency to view things from a 21st century perspective
- That isn’t always helpful

Prior to the cross, believers lived under the Old Covenant

- There was no Church

The focus was on Israel

- If you were a believing Gentile, then you had to become a Jewish proselyte

But at Pentecost, something amazing and extraordinary happened

- The Church was born

For the first time, believing Jews and believing Gentiles were placed on equal footing

- Believers from both groups comprise the Body of Christ

We are living in this Church age

- But the Church has not always existed
- Nor will the Church always exist in the future

The next major event in God’s timetable is the Rapture of the Church

- Those Christians – both Jew and Greek – who have believed during the Church age will be gathered together in the air
- Christ will then take us to be with him in heaven

The Rapture of the Church is a hope belonging to the Church⁴

- Not to the nation Israel
- Israel's hope will be beyond the time of the Rapture

While we face the bema seat judgment and enjoy the marriage supper of the Lamb, things will be quite different on Earth

- The Earth will go through seven years of Tribulation

Take note, beloved

- I am not aware of any Scripture that refers to the Church going through any part of the Tribulation

In the book of Revelation, I find is very fascinating that the Holy Spirit did not use the Greek term for church (*ekklesia*) in chapters 4-21

- Revelation 4 begins the description of the Tribulation

But why is there no mention of the church (*ekklesia*) in Revelation 4-21?

- Because the Church has been raptured
- The believers will be in the presence of Christ

It is my understanding that when the Church is raptured, this is the end of the Church age

- There will continue to be sinners who embrace Jesus Christ during the Tribulation
- But they are not called the church

I think that Paul's use of "**the fullness of the Gentiles**" is a prophetic term that signifies the ending of the Church age

- Again, because of the Jewish rejection of Jesus Christ, the Gospel door has been opened to the Gentiles

After the seven year tribulation, there will be 1000 years of peace on Earth

- This is known as the millennial kingdom

Christ will return with the OT saints and the Church, prior to this kingdom

- He will rule and reign on the throne for this literal 1000 years

I am using broad strokes in painting this prophetic timetable

- I am not including every single event

We will see later this morning that sometime in the future, "**all Israel will be saved**"

- I believe the nation of Israel will enjoy a spiritual revival and rejuvenation during this physical reign of Jesus Christ on Earth

I fully understand that you may disagree with me on what will happen in the future

- But this is the fruit of my study over the years

Whatever view you hold to, make sure of a few things

- First, make sure that Scripture is your guide
 - o I have seen people become enamored with a system of theology instead of studying the Scriptures

⁴ William R. Newell, *Romans: Verse-by-Verse*, 434.

- Second, you have to be true to the covenants of the Old Testament
 - o There are still elements of covenants that await fulfillment
 - o How do you account for those?
- Third, you have to include all elements of which the Scripture teaches
 - o If you are amillennial, how can you justify your position?
 - o If you are post-trib or hold to covenant theology, how do you fit in the rapture, millennial kingdom, etc.?

I am glad that prophecy isn't an issue that defines who is and isn't saved

- We can disagree with one another in Christian love

Again, going back to verse 25, I believe that “the fullness of the Gentiles” is when God shifts His focus back to the nation Israel

- There will be more than the remnant who will embrace Jesus Christ

So the first question that we have to ask from this text is, “When will Israel be saved? (11:25)

- Paul answers, when “the fullness of the Gentiles has come in”

The language of “has come in” is salvation language

- They have entered into a relationship with Jesus Christ

But Paul deals with a second question in verses 26-27

II. What part of Israel will be saved? (11:26-27)

26 and thus all Israel will be saved:

When “the fullness of the Gentiles has come in,” then the apostle says, “and thus all Israel will be saved”

- We have to notice the clear connection between verse 25 and 26
- One leads directly into the other

Throughout Romans 9-11, Paul's use of “Israel” denotes the ethnic nation⁵

- We can't discount or minimize this

So what does “all Israel” mean?

- First, it can refer to the Church – the believing Jews and Gentiles who have embraced Jesus Christ
- Second, it can refer to the remnant of Jews who will embrace Jesus as Messiah
- Third, it can refer to the entire, ethnic nation of Israel

We have seen time and time again how the remnant will be saved

- But the language of “all Israel” is far different than remnant terminology⁶

The very existence of the believing remnant is the “earnest” or guarantee of the final salvation of “all Israel”⁷

⁵ Moo, 721.

⁶ Douglas J. Moo, *NICNT, Romans*, 713.

⁷ F.F. Bruce, *Tyndale NT Commentaries, Romans*, 208.

We are told in Zechariah 13 that 2/3 of the Jewish people will die during the seven year Tribulation⁸

- The remaining 1/3 that survives the Tribulation will constitute the entire nation of Israel
- Thus, “**all Israel will be saved**”

This phrase “**all Israel**” is a recurring theme in Jewish literature⁹

- It does not refer to every single Jew without exception

Rather, it refers to Israel as a whole

- Speaking of the nation

just as it is written, “THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”

After the Tribulation, the Lord Jesus will return to the Earth to set up His 1000 year reign on Earth

- These are the words of Zechariah 12:10, “**I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn**” (emphasis mine)

What other time in the prophetic future will the Jewish people look upon the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved?

- It will be too late to be saved at the time of judgment

In verse 26, Paul quotes Isaiah 59:20-21

- The prophet associates the coming of the Messiah with the new covenant
- The Messiah is, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ

Jeremiah also spoke of the new covenant, “**‘Behold, days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,’ declares the LORD. ‘But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,’ declares the LORD, ‘I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,’ declares the LORD, ‘for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.’”** (31:31-34)

- God promised that His law would be written on the heart

God is faithful to His Word

- What He promises will come true

Jerusalem was where the Gospel originated (Rom 15:19)

- But it will also be the place of Israel’s glorious consummation¹⁰

⁸ Steven A. Kreloff, *God’s Plan for Israel*, 93.

⁹ Morris, 420-21.

¹⁰ Bruce, 209.

27 “AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.”

Continuing to pull support from the prophecy of Isaiah, Paul says that God’s covenant with Israel will be one of forgiveness of sins

- This is salvific language, “when I take away their sins”

The Abrahamic covenant did not specify forgiveness of sins

- That is the language of the new covenant

As we have seen through Romans, a sinner is justified on the basis of faith alone

- Sinners can have their sins taken away
- Amazing grace!

We have asked two questions thus far

- **When will Israel be saved? (11:25)**
- **What part of Israel will be saved? (11:26-27)**

III. Why will Israel be saved? (11:28-32)

28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake,

Verse 28 strikes us as a bit odd

- Because it lists Israel as both “enemies” and “beloved”

But we must look at each of these items individually

- We will see that each is true

Because of their rejection, Israel is regarded as “enemies”

- They have set themselves against God, the Gospel, and all who believe the Gospel

Romans 5:10 said, “For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life”

- We were all enemies before God reconciled us to Himself

but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;

Even though the unbelieving Jewish people are regarded as “enemies,” they are still “beloved”

- How can this be?

Regardless of what they do, Israel is still the national people of God

- He has not abandoned them
- He has not utterly rejected them

There will be a future for this nation

- And it will be a glorious future

Is God somehow blessing Israel because of the merit of “the fathers”?

- Certainly not!

God is blessing Israel because of His own gracious promises

- “I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you” (Gen 17:7)

Was God surprised at the rejection of the nation Israel?

- No!

God knew that the nation would reject Him

- God knew that the Gentiles would benefit from this

Again, God’s faithfulness is on the line

- Can God be trusted?
- Is God’s Word reliable?

God made specific promises to the patriarchs

- His promise is irrevocable

That is what Paul discusses in verse 29

29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Verse 29 continues to speak of the nation as a whole¹¹

- Not individuals

The words of verse 29 provide much needed hope for the nation Israel¹²

- All is not lost
- God has not turned His back on His people forever

Verse 29 would have continued to show the Gentiles that God does have a plan for the nation Israel

- That the Church has not replaced Israel in the plan of God

How do we know this to be true?

- How can we be sure that God’s promises will come true?

This is part of the mystery that Paul unveils!

- Things that we would not know otherwise

The “gifts” that Paul mentions are probably the blessings that were listed back in Romans 9:4-5

- Called Israelites
- Adoption as sons
- The glory
- The covenants
- The giving of the Law
- The *temple* service
- The promises
- The fathers
- From whom is the Christ according the flesh

¹¹ Morris, 423.

¹² John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans*, 441.

These are the blessings which the nation Israel enjoyed

- Yet they began to trust in these blessings instead of the One who gave those blessings

The “calling” was the status of being called the national people of God

- They were set apart from other nations to be God’s people

But national election is not synonymous with individual election

- Just because a Jew was a part of the nation Israel was no guarantee that he/she was a part of the spiritual family of God

Again, haven’t we seen this throughout Romans and the Gospels?

- Jews trusting in their heritage instead of the Lord Jesus Christ

Romans 9-11 are still a part of the epistle to the Romans

- The theme of Romans is listed in the first chapter, “**For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek**” (1:16)

Individual salvation has always been by grace through faith

- Never through human lineage
- Never through human merit

God’s gifts and calling are “**irrevocable**”

- God doesn’t take back His promises
- “**it is not as though the word of God has failed**” (Rom 9:6)

He isn’t fickle

- God is faithful

30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience.

The apostle again targets his Gentile audience with sobering words

- This time, it is remember

Paul sets the Gentiles and Jews in contrast with one another in verses 30 & 31

11:30	11:31
You	These
Once	now
Were disobedient	Have been disobedient
Now	But now
Have been shown mercy	Have been shown mercy
Because of their disobedience	Because of the mercy shown to you

He reminds his Gentile brothers and sisters that they “**once were disobedient to God**”

- It’s easy to point the finger at Israel
- But how about pointing the finger back at themselves?

They were formerly disobedient, “**but now (they) have been shown mercy**”

- I am so grateful for those “but God” statements

I am so grateful that God doesn't leave us in our sins

- He doesn't leave us to ourselves

God rescues us

- He delivers us
- He saves us
- He redeems us
- He changes us
- He sanctifies us

This is what the Gentiles needed to remember

- Look in the rearview mirror
- Look what God has done for you!

When we remind ourselves of what God has done in our lives, then we will be better able to extend grace to others

- And that's what Paul tells the Gentiles about the Jews in verse 31

31 so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.

Just as the Gentiles were disobedient, so were the Jews

- Just as the Gentiles were shown mercy, so were the Jews

We have learned that upon the national rejection of the Messiah by the Jews, God then opened the door of salvation predominantly to the Gentiles

- God used the believing Gentiles to promote jealousy within unbelieving Jews (10:19)

It was because of the Jews' disobedience that the Gentiles experienced mercy

- But it was through God's mercy to the Gentiles that the Jews will be shown mercy¹³

32 For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.

The apostle Paul does an amazing thing here in verse 32

- He makes the Jews and Gentiles equal in their guilt

In God's eyes, both groups are guilty

- No one has a more open door than the other

In the words of Romans 3:22b-23, “**for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**”

- “**there is no distinction**” between the two groups

¹³ Morris, 425.

The word for “**shut up**” is a very picturesque term

- It was used of a prison, confining someone to a place of punishment

But it was also used of catching a fish in a net

- The thought would be one of enclosing the fish in a situation of no escape

What a vivid picture of the situation that Jews and Gentiles are in!

- We are all like a prisoner, locked away
- We are all like fish in a net, caught with no escape

With both groups, it is God’s “**mercy**” that saves

- His Divine act of not giving what sinners deserve
- And that is spiritual condemnation and separation

What a way to end this great section

- Even though the Jews were the national people of God, they didn’t have an advantage when it came to salvation
- They were on equal footing in terms of guilt

The Gentiles, perhaps prone to spiritual pride and feelings of superiority, were reminded of their own past

- The Gentiles certainly didn’t deserve salvation any more than the Jews

We remind ourselves of what we learned back in Romans 9

- “**For He says to Moses, ‘I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION.’ So then it *does not depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy**” (9:15-16)
- “**So then He has mercy on whom He desires**” (9:18a)

God is not obligated to save anyone

- No one has God in his back pocket

This verse cannot be made to support universalism

- The heresy that every single person will be saved from God’s wrath

Paul again is speaking in corporate terms

- Gentiles and Jews
- Not individuals

We see that God is on a mission of mercy

- Both for Jews and Gentiles

God’s mercy shines brightly because all human merit has been swept aside¹⁴

- No one has a “right” to God
- No one “deserves” a relationship with Jesus Christ

There is not a single person, Jew or Gentile, who deserves to be spared from God’s wrath and condemnation

- Yet multitudes have been spared over the years
- We are part of that graced group

¹⁴ Alva J. McClain, *Romans: The Gospel of God’s Grace*, 203.

This is what Paul wants the Gentile Christians to see

- This is why we can't be arrogant
- This is why we can't be prideful toward the Jewish people

In reality, we are no more deserving than they

- We all deserve hell

God's purposes are shown to unfold like a play¹⁵

- At first, the nation Israel occupies center stage
- The attention is given to them

Then, all of a sudden, the Gentiles take center stage

- The Jews don't have the limelight

Toward the end of the play, in a marvelous twist of the plot, the Jews emerge again

- They are given the center stage as the curtain falls

Dear friend, this isn't a Hollywood production or Broadway play

- This is the Divine purpose unfolding before our eyes

We are extremely blessed to live during the Church age

- Many Gentiles are given the opportunity to repent and turn to the Messiah

But don't think that God has turned His back permanently on the Jews

- They will have their turn in the future

We have sought to answer three questions this morning from this Text

1. When will Israel be saved? (11:25)

- a. Sometime in the future when “**the fullness of the Gentiles has come in**”

2. What part of Israel will be saved? (11:26-27)

- a. “**all Israel will be saved**”
- b. There will be a nationwide revival on the part of the Jews
- c. Not every single Israelite will be saved, but there will be more than the current remnant

3. Why will Israel be saved? (11:28-32)

- a. In the say way that anyone is saved – “**mercy**”
- b. God will show unfathomable mercy on those who rejected Him

Have you embraced Jesus Christ as Messiah?

- Have you surrendered your life to follow Him wholeheartedly?

Don't harden your heart in unbelief

- Humble your heart

¹⁵ Moo, 712.

Regardless of who you are, God can extend mercy

- He alone can spare you from His wrath and judgment

Believing friend, have you become spiritually arrogant toward others?

- Looking down on them because you are saved and they are not?
- Thinking that you are more deserving than someone else?

We all deserve God's wrath

- But we have been shown mercy!