

All Israel Will Be Saved - Part 2

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 11:25-26
Preached on: Sunday, July 23, 2012

It is always a privilege to be able to look into the Word of God and I would encourage you now to take your Bibles and turn to Romans chapter 11 as we continue our examination of this amazing epistle. Follow along as I read Romans 11 beginning with verse 25. And this will actually be the second of what will probably be a four part series on the topic, "All Israel will be saved."

Romans 11 verse 25.

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery — so that you will not be wise in your own estimation — that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.¹

We return now to the climactic conclusion of Paul's revelation concerning Israel's election, defection and salvation, in other words, the contents of Romans nine, 10 and 11. And, as you can tell, this results in one of the most magnificent doxologies in all of Scripture. And, friends, if you know Christ, if these truths do not thrill your soul and motivate you to serve the King, there is something terribly wrong with your life.

Here Paul humbles arrogant Gentile saints of that day and also of this day who considered themselves to be superior to God's beloved enemy Israel. Those who thought in that day—as many do today—that God has permanently abandoned them and bestowed the covenantal blessings that he once offered to them and promised to them to

¹ Romans 11:25-36.

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the New Testament Church instead. And, sadly, to this day there are many Gentiles who believe that ethnic, national, territorial Israel is all absorbed now in the universal Christian Church, this eliminating their national identity.

But Paul has argued otherwise even at the beginning of this chapter. He asks the question:

“God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!”²

Now here in verses 25 through 36 Paul continues to bring very humbling clarity to this issue by exalting four attributes of God that are put on display through his dealings with Israel. Here we see, first, his sovereign grace; secondly, his unfailing faithfulness; thirdly, is infinite mercy; and, finally, is incomprehensible holiness.

Now the last time we were together we examined the first attribute, his sovereign grace. Notice verse 25.

“For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery — so that you will not be wise in your own estimation — that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved.”³

Of course this mystery as we learned last week, speaks of the marvelous chain of events in the sovereign purposes of God that ultimately result in the salvation and the restoration of Israel when the nation itself will be restored to its ancient place of divine favor and supremacy. God sovereignly ordained to harden the hearts of the vast majority of his chosen people Israel due to their belief, due their unbelief. Yet as we have learned, he has preserved for himself a remnant of those hardened from ethnic national Israel, those branches that have been broken off. And they will one day be saved en masse.

Now that is not to say that, as some may be confused, that every Jew that has ever lived will be saved. Of course not. There is a remnant today that have not been hardened that are coming to Christ. Most are perishing in their sins. They are not a part of the elect. But there are also many Jews who are part of the hardened group—remember there is a partial hardening—not all of them are hardened—but there is members of that partial hardening or of the hardened group today that will perish in their sins, but some of them will be saved. And that will happen when the Lord returns again.

As we look at Bible prophecy we see that the shadows of prophecy tend to cast themselves forward. And today we see many Israelites, many Jews returning to their ancient homeland. They are returning in unbelief and we see, therefore, that the stage is being set for the prekingdom judgments that will occur during the time of Daniel’s 70th week when God will finally, again, deal with his covenant people and ultimately return.

² Romans 11:1.

³ Romans 11:25-26.

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What a marvelous demonstration all of this is of God's sovereign grace, not only to set his love upon certain people in eternity past, but then to be able to orchestrate the myriad of events in order to accomplish his redemptive purposes. This is so humbling. Not only with respect to his purposes for Israel, but for all whom he has foreordained and predestined to salvation.

Now, secondly, what we will look at today is the humbling truths pertaining to God's unfailing faithfulness. Again, if you will notice the text in verse 26. And here we understand that according to the previous verse, after the fullness of the Gentiles is come in, in other words, when the last Gentile in the Church age elected unto salvation has been saved, we read this:

“...and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, ‘THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.’ ‘AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM.’”⁴

I might add that verse 26 and verse 27, the first part, is really quoted from Isaiah 59 verses 20 and 21. It also includes some of the language of Psalm 14:7. He goes on to say here in verse 27.

“AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.”⁵

That is a quote from Isaiah 27:9 and also out of Jeremiah 31 verses 33 and 34.

Now contextually, as a footnote here, both Isaiah 59 and 31 from which these texts are quoted include not only Israel's spiritual salvation, the forgiveness of sins, but also as you look at those texts, it includes the physical restoration of Israel to their land as part of Israel's redemptive blessings.

Now think about this. What a staggering picture of God's unfailing faithfulness to do exactly what he has promised solely on the basis of his sovereign grace. No man deserves forgiveness of sin. And what we see is that salvation is all of grace from start to finish.

So he says that the deliverer literally the liberator will come from Zion. He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.

Now what does he mean when he says he will come from Zion? Some would say, “Well, other passages say that he is going to come to Zion.” Well, the reality is both are true. In Psalm 14:7 we read that God comes out of or from Zion and in Isaiah 59:20 we read that

⁴ Romans 11:26-27.

⁵ Romans 11:27.

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the deliverer comes to or for Zion. So what we must understand in Scripture is that there exists both a heavenly and an earthly Zion. The heavenly Zion is where the Lord Jesus Christ currently resides. It is the seat of God's manifested glory. We read this in Psalm 20 and verse two and Isaiah 31:9 and many other passages. It is where Christ is currently seated upon his throne of intercession as we read in Hebrews 12 verses 22 through 24. In fact, that text speaks of the terror that Moses experienced at Mount Sinai.

You will recall the terrifying presence of God descended upon the mount in the giving of the law. Man could not please God on Sinai's terms which required perfect obedience, but the heavenly Mount Zion, the heavenly abode of God is made accessible to all who approach him through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why if we go to Hebrews 12 and verse 22 we read this.

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.⁶

So the apostle Paul is telling us here in Romans 11:26-27 that in eternity past God ordained a day of judgment when the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah will arise from his throne of intercession in the heavenly Zion and he will return, once again, to the earthly Zion in its present ungodly state. And the great liberator will save those sinners at that time. He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.

I am compelled to give you further background on this matter of a heavenly Zion and how it relates to the sacred drama of God's plan of redemption. Sometimes we fail to see the big picture of Scripture.

So think with me along these lines. We understand from Scripture that God exists currently in the third heaven, 2 Corinthians 12:2, beyond the furthest galaxies known to man. There, as we read the Bible we understand that God dwells in his heavenly temple. He is utterly separated from sin. That is the place of perfect holiness. Isaiah 57:15 reads:

"For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, 'I dwell on a high and holy place.'"⁷

It is important for you to understand that this heavenly temple became the prototype that God used to create his first sanctuary on earth which was the Garden of Eden and later the earthly tabernacle and temples. Prior to sin you will recall that man enjoyed sweet

⁶ Hebrews 11:22-24.

⁷ Isaiah 57:15.

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fellowship with God in the garden, the place where God's presence on earth mirrored the court of God in heaven. Because of this, there are obvious similarities between the Garden of Eden and the earthly sanctuaries that God designed in the tabernacle and the temples. This can be seen, for example, in the geography and the landscape of Eden and how it corresponds to the physical arrangement and even the sacred objects of the tabernacle and temples.

In Genesis chapter two and verse eight we learn that God planted the garden, quote:

“...toward the east, in Eden.”⁸

East in Hebrew, מַעַרְבָּד (keh'-dem), literally means faceward of frontward which means that God drove man out of the garden in an eastward direction, away from his presence. Because of sin, according to Genesis 3:24, God drove the man out and at the east of the garden of Eden he stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life. This corresponds with the two cherubim that guarded the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant and the tabernacle and in the temple, the only place where God could meet with man. Exodus 25.

The terrifying presence of the cherubim with their flaming swords speaks strongly about God's intention to judge any sinful man that would dare approach his holy presence.

It is fascinating, as we read in Scripture, Cain was driven from God's presence to a land, quote, east of Eden in Genesis 4:16. And what we learn in Scripture is that east is always the direction of separation from God, the direction of idolatry. We read in Ezekiel eight where God shows the prophet in a vision all of the foreign abominations that defile the temple and in verse 16 he reveals something horrifying. We see the high priest and the 24 orders of priests actually bowing to the east and worshipping the sun as an idol. That text reads as follows.

“...at the entrance to the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs to the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east; and they were prostrating themselves eastward toward the sun.”⁹

So, again, as we look at Scripture we learn that east is the direction of separation from God, the direction of idolatry. God gave Adam the land of the Garden of Eden, but because of their sin he banished them to the east. Later on God gave Abraham the land of Israel, but because of sin the Israelites God banished his people to their east in their exiles.

⁸ Genesis 2:8.

⁹ Ezekiel 8:16.

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Now because the tabernacle and the temple mirror the Garden of Eden, we see that the holy of holies, for example, is positioned in the far western part of those structures. In fact, as we look at Scripture we see an east west orientation in both the earthly tabernacle and temples as well as the heavenly temple. We will not take time to look at all those Scriptures, but I want you to understand this, because this has significance when we understand the Lord coming, the deliverer coming out of Zion, coming back to Zion.

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest would reverse the people's spiritual exile from God and restore them to a relationship with God. And in order to picture this on that Day of Atonement, the high priest would go outside of the camp and he would move from a westward direction into the tabernacle toward the holy of holies, stationed at the far western part of the structure where the shekinah glory of the presence of God hovered over the mercy seat between the wings of the cherubim.

Now we see the significance of an east west orientation in Ezekiel's vision. You will recall he witnessed the shekinah glory of God, the presence of God departing from the holy of holies because of the abominations of the people and gradually leaving the temple, gradually going out of the city, gradually disappearing. For example, in Ezekiel chapter 10 beginning in verse 18 we read:

Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. When the cherubim departed, they lifted their wings and rose up from the earth in my sight with the wheels beside them; and they stood still at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD'S house. And the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them.¹⁰

As you continue to read Ezekiel's vision you learn in verse 23 of chapter 11:

“And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood over the mountain which is east of the city.”¹¹

The vision stops there. The glory is gone. Ichabod. The glory has departed. But what is fascinating, dear friends, is to know that when the deliverer comes from Zion, the heavenly Zion, he is going to return in a westward direction. He will come through the eastern gate, Ezekiel 43 and verse four. He will descend to the Mount of Olives, the place where Jesus ascended and from the east he will move toward the west, because moving from the east toward the west is the direction of atonement, the direction of reconciliation, the direction of forgiveness.

As we read earlier in Zechariah 14 and verse four.

¹⁰ Ezekiel 10:18-19.

¹¹ Ezekiel 11:23.

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“And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives.”¹²

That very place from which the glory once departed.

And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. And you will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!¹³

In his vision of the glory of God filling the millennial temple, after the Lord returns and establishes that during the messianic age, Ezekiel says in chapter 43 verse one:

Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing toward the east; and behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the way of the east. And His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory.¹⁴

It is fascinating to note that the Muslims have deliberately placed a cemetery in front of the eastern gate in an effort to somehow defile the land and prevent the Messiah from returning as he has promised. Never forget, dear friends, that there is a great spiritual war going on between the god of this world, small g, and the God of glory who will one day take back from the usurper that which is his.

Now think about what Scriptures teach. Get the big picture. Because of Adam’s sin in the garden man could no longer return to God, yet God in his infinite love on Mount Sinai was willing to return to man, not physically, but spiritually and there he revealed to Moses his law and he instituted the tabernacle that would replace the garden sanctuary. You read about that in Exodus 19. And in the innermost structure of that ... or I should say the innermost sanctuary of that structure, God provided a way for sinners to enter into his holy presence. And how did he do that? He provided that way through a mediated entrance made possible by the priesthood that he established as you read in Leviticus chapters one through chapter seven.

And think about it. While the cherubim in Eden were stationed facing outward to prevent sinful man from returning to the presence of God and his defiled condition, those stationed above the mercy seat faced inward. Why? To invite sinful man into the

¹² Zechariah 14:4.

¹³ Zechariah 14:4-5.

¹⁴ Ezekiel 43:1-2.

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presence of a holy God on the basis of the blood of an innocent sacrifice that was sprinkled upon that mercy seat on the Day of Atonement. And all of this, of course, pointed to our perfect high priest, the spotless Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ who satisfied the justice of God for the sins of all who would place their trust in him.

So you must understand that both Israel as well as its temple became a microcosm of how God is dealing with mankind. So, indeed, as the prophet Isaiah says and Paul quotes here in Romans 11:26:

“...all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, ‘THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.’”¹⁵

One further and final footnote on this issue. It is exciting to know that when the Lord returns he is going to renovate the earth and return it, once again, to edenic splendor. Ezekiel 36:35 tells us:

“And they will say, ‘This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate, and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited.’”¹⁶

Beloved, the Messiah’s reign upon the earth will so radically change every legitimate aspect of human life that all mankind will be able to experience his regal, saving activity. Just read Isaiah 33 and verse six, so many other passages.

During the messianic age he will once again dwell in sweet fellowship with his redeemed, Ezekiel 43 verses one through 12.

And Isaiah tells us in Isaiah 51 verse three:

“Indeed, the LORD will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places. And her wilderness He will make like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in her, Thanksgiving and sound of a melody.”¹⁷

Every believer should anticipate with great joy that day when we will dwell in the heavenly city described in Hebrews 13:14 when the heavenly Zion comes down to the earthly Zion. You will recall that Abraham was looking for a city which has foundations whose architect and builder is God, Hebrews 11 and verse 10. And we, too, like Abraham should, quote, desire a better country, that is a heavenly one, as he goes on to say in verse 16. And John describes the city of the new Jerusalem in Revelation, a perfect cube 1500 miles in length and width, according to Revelation 21:16. And he tells us in verse 22 that there is no temple in it, for the Lord God almighty and the Lamb are its

¹⁵ Romans 11:26.

¹⁶ Ezekiel 36:35.

¹⁷ Isaiah 51:3.

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temple. So it would appear that this magnificent cubed city called the new Jerusalem is actually the holy of holies of the heavenly temple come down to earth where currently the Lord God himself resides, because there in verse 23 of Revelation 21 we read:

“...for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.”¹⁸

Now with that background we can better understand Isaiah’s prophecy regarding Israel’s future. Verse 26.

“THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”¹⁹

I am reminded of Psalm 14 verse seven:

“Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD restores His captive people, Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad.”²⁰

So, indeed, dear friends, one day the deliver will come from the heavenly Zion to the earthly Zion and he will manifest his presence and his protection and his power and he will rule from that place with a rod of iron and righteousness and peace.

But notice what else the Holy Spirit reveals to us through the apostle here in verse 27.

"AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."²¹

Quoting from Isaiah 27 verse nine. Now what is this covenant that he made with Israel? Well, it speaks of the new covenant promised in Jeremiah 31 verses 33 through 34. There we read in verse 33:

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."²²

¹⁸ Revelation 21:23.

¹⁹ Romans 11:26.

²⁰ Psalm 14:7.

²¹ Romans 11:27.

²² Jeremiah 31:33-34.

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But it is important for you to understand that this new covenant in Jeremiah 31 is rooted in God's original covenant that he made with Abraham. The basis of Israel's salvation will be, according to Galatians 3:16 the seed of Abraham. And that is in fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. It is not on the basis of Israel's merit. God is under no obligation to them or to any man. Their sin will be forgiven solely on the basis of God's mercy. So, again, he elected a remnant unto salvation from those that he hardened and because of his unfailing faithfulness to his promise to Abraham, he will save that remnant by his grace. And this is part of the humbling truth that Paul is trying to impart to the arrogant Gentiles of his day. Not only should they be humbled by God's sovereign grace as he works this inconceivably glorious plan to the praise of his glory, but also because of his unfailing faithfulness to fulfill his unconditional, irreversible, unilateral covenant that he made to Abraham.

Now let's talk about this covenant for a moment. God's covenant with Abraham was introduced in Genesis chapter 12 verses one through three. Later on it was actually made in Genesis 15 verses 18 through 21. It was reaffirmed later again in chapter 17 verses one through 21. And as we study it, we learn, very quickly, that it was unconditional in the sense of its ultimate fulfillment of a kingdom and a salvation for Israel, although conditional in terms of immediate fulfillment, because there would be certain responsibilities that would fall upon its recipients.

But in Genesis 15 we have this amazing testimony of what happened. The Lord comes down to Abram, this was before his name was changed to Abraham, comes down to him in a vision and God promises him an heir and God promised that his descendants would be as countless as the stars in heaven. And in verse six we read:

Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

And He said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it." And he said, "O Lord GOD, how may I know that I shall possess it?" So He said to him, "Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon." Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. And the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.

Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. And God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. "But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions. "And as for you, you shall go to

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your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. "Then in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."

And it came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite."²³

In other words, he was communicating to him all of the nations that inhabited that region so he would know precisely the boundary of the promise, which, by the way, I might add, vastly exceed the current little piece of real estate that Israel possesses.

What a fascinating account. Many scholars believe that the two fowls in the sacrifice were considered as one part of the sacrifice. So when you add that one part with the three animals divided in two you come up with the number seven. Seven parts in the sacrifice, seven being the symbol of completeness, the symbol of finality and perfection. And this was a common ritual to ratify covenants in those ancient days.

Normally, however, the two parties would walk together between the severed animals, pledging their faithfulness to the covenant. And also giving a picture of what would happen to them if one of them were to violate the covenant that you would end up like one of those animals. But what is fascinating here is that God removed Abram from any participation in or fulfilling of that covenant. While it revolved around him humanly speaking, its conditions, its obligations were all up to God. The blessings of the covenant were not conditioned upon the meritorious acts of Abraham, but were received by him simply on the basis of his faith in the God that gave the conditions to him.

So this covenant was unconditional. It was unilateral. It was not like the bilateral covenant that God gave to Moses in the law. This was unilateral. It was made between God and himself. And therefore it did not depend upon the faithfulness of Abraham or his descendants. It depends upon God.

Hebrews chapter six verse 13 we read of this.

For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU, AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU." And thus, having

²³ Genesis 15:6-21.

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patiently waited, he obtained the promise. For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.²⁴

So, as we return to Romans 11 beginning in verse 25 Paul is, in essence, saying, “Gentiles, don’t be arrogant towards Israel. I am revealing to you the mystery of their salvation and their restoration based solely on God’s sovereign election and his faithfulness to keep his covenant promises based upon the character of God.”

Paul’s whole argument in Romans 11 is based upon God’s covenant with them, verse 27.

“WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.”²⁵

Once again, a reference to the new covenant promise of Jeremiah 31. And this is why all of Israel will be saved, those who are left—and remember we studied the prophets tell us that two thirds will be destroyed, a third will be left. They will be saved therefore, en masse when the Lord returns.

Verse 28. He goes on to say:

From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.²⁶

Now what is this calling? Well this calling in the Word of God speaks of that inward call of God which without fail results in men responding to Christ in faith and accepting God’s offer of salvation. And this term irrevocable in the original language carries the sense of not feeling regret as a result of what someone has done. In other words, God is never going to have a change of heart, not even Israel’s rebellion and unbelief can cause him to change his mind, because God’s faithfulness is unfailing.

²⁴ Hebrews 6:13-20.

²⁵ Romans 11:27.

²⁶ Romans 11:28-29.

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This is so comforting. Certainly it would have been comforting to the apostle Paul who grieved over the rebellious unbelief of his fellow Israelites to know that God's Word is immutable. It never changes.

Malachi three and verse six:

"For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed."²⁷

Today corporate, unbelieving Israel, not the remnant who have not been hardened, unbelieving Israel today are enemies for the sake of the Gentiles that we might be grafted into that rich root of patriarchal blessing that we might be saved and we rejoice in that. And you might say that unbelieving Jews are passively, quote, enemies of God, while at the same time being passively beloved of God. But as Paul says here, from the standpoint of, quote, the election, that is, God's original irrevocable choice of national Israel, by his grace alone according to divine foreknowledge as Paul talked about in verses one and two, unbelieving Jews that he has just designated as enemies, that group that is separate and distinct from the soft hearted remnant that is coming to Christ today, those unbelieving Jews are, at the same time, beloved by God. Why? On account of the original, irrevocable promise that God made to the fathers, to the patriarchs, to Abraham, not ultimately reconfirmed to Isaac and to Jacob.

As a footnote, dear friends, it is beyond reason to conclude that these two verses describe the Church and not ethnic national Israel. I would submit to you, how can the Church, the body of Christ possibly be described as God's beloved enemy? It makes no sense whatsoever. Moreover, if God is presently no longer covenantally related to national Israel then I have no idea what any of this means. And I have no idea what frankly about a third of the Bible means. And I would humbly submit that you don't either.

Barry Horner has written an expanded translation of these two verses, 28 and 29. I find this very helpful. He says, "From the perspective of the gospel of the righteousness of God that saves both Jew and Gentile, the bulk of national Israel presently remains an enemy of God for the sake of the salvation of the Gentiles throughout the world. However, from the perspective of God's original election of national Israel, still remaining in unbelief, at the same time this Hebrew people continues to be beloved from the sake of the unconditional Abrahamic covenant ratified to Isaac and Jacob. Therefore, because of God's covenant integrity, the gospel gifts of the saving call of God directed toward national Israel through the promise given to Abraham will not be repealed," end quote.

So what is Paul's remedy for Gentile arrogance, for those who would consider themselves to be singularly and forever more highly favored by God to the exclusion of the Jews, what is his answer to that? We could summarize it by putting it this way. The

²⁷ Malachi 3:6.

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answer is the revelation of Israel's future salvation and restoration based upon God's sovereign election and his unfailing faithfulness to keep the covenant promises that he made to the patriarchs.

Think about it in the Old Testament. Why did the mediatorial kingdom of Israel's theocracy fail? Why did it fall apart? Two reasons. One, because the hearts of the people were wicked. And, secondly, because the hearts of the rulers were wicked. So what is the remedy? You have got to change the hearts of the people. You have got to put the law of God within them that they might become righteous. And, secondly, you have got to change the rulers. You have to have a holy, righteous ruler, which is none other than the Son of God, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is he who must ascend the throne.

This is God's glorious plan of redemption as it relates to future Israel. In fact, it is interesting. All through Scripture you see two parallel themes in God's plan. You will see it on every page of Scripture if you know to look for it. Number one, you are going to see that he is all about redeeming the people. And, secondly, he must restore the kingdom. He has got to redeem the people and he is going to restore the kingdom. With respect to redeeming the people, that is why you hear him called the Lamb and the Savior. With respect to restoring the kingdom you hear him called the Lion and the King. There is a huge difference between the cross and a throne.

{?} tells us, quote, "What the world needs, as the prophet saw clearly, is not primarily a better philosophy of government or a more perfect system of legislation, but a person who has the character, wisdom and power needed to rule for God among men. This is the central theme of prophecy from first to last. The restoration of man's lost dominion must come through a person. He shall bruise the usurper's head, Genesis 3:15. It is not to some impersonal organization, but to the king that that judgments of God will be committed, Psalm 72:1. On his shoulder the government of God must rest according to Isaiah 9:6."

Oh, child of God, don't miss this. The unceasing grief, the great sorrow of Paul's heart that he described in Romans 9:1 was over the unbelief of his kinsmen, but this eventually gives way to such a glorious doxology as he reveals God's plan of redemption for Israel.

Writing to the common people of Judah when they were living under wicked rulers in a day of great idolatry and false prophets, here is what Micah says in Micah chapter seven beginning in verse 18.

Who is a God like Thee, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, Thou wilt cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt give truth to Jacob

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And unchanging love to Abraham, Which Thou didst swear to our forefathers From the days of old.²⁸

Now, as we wrap all of this up and we reflect upon not only the thrilling aspects of the prophetic Word, especially as it relates to Israel's future, we want to ask ourselves. What can we today glean from this personally and practically? Let me give you three things very quickly that I think are very important. Number one, dear friends, be humbled as well as excited that God is not finished with Israel. She is a picture of God's mercy, a grand drama of redemption. God has not abandoned her. Nor will she ever again be removed from her land. But, secondly, be excited about our salvation knowing that yes God has saved us, but whether we are Jew or Gentile, please remember this. Our salvation is not God's primary goal in redemption. It is easy for us to think that we are the center of the universe and God orbits around us. But that is not so. Our salvation is secondary at best in God's goal. You see, God's primary goal in his plan of redemption is to bring glory to himself. Practically speaking we have got to remember that God does not exist for us. We exist for him. Now that sounds very plain and simple, but frankly, many Christians today have that completely turned around.

His goal in your life, dear friends, is not to make you happy, but to make you holy. The Church does not exist to make you all feel good, to meet all of your needs, to make sure that everybody is happy. No, the purpose of the Church is to proclaim and to protect the truth of the gospel that sinners might be converted, that saints might be edified to do the work of the ministry and that God might be glorified amongst a bunch of sinners saved by grace.

So you want to ask yourself. Am I living to the praise of his glory? Because that is what all of this is about. Nothing else in life matters.

And the third thing that I would want you to take away very practically is, dear friends, celebrate God's unfailing faithfulness. Wouldn't it be awful if God was fickle and capricious and every now and then he decided to change his mind and he wouldn't make good on his Word? Don't you hate it when you sign some contract and somebody violates the contract and you are left out to dry? Not so with God. You see, friends, his faithfulness is the very basis of our hope.

The writer of Hebrews gave us such great assurance in this regard. He tells us in Hebrews 10:23:

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."²⁹

²⁸ Micah 7:18-20.

²⁹ Hebrews 10:23.

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You see, nothing can thwart the purposes of God. Nothing can prevent him from fulfilling his promises. Not only to his beloved enemies, Israel, but also to all of the rest of us Gentiles who have been grafted into the vine of blessing. And even as all of his promises to Israel will be fulfilled perfectly, so, too, every promise that he has made to you and to me, a sinner saved by grace will be perfectly fulfilled.

1 Thessalonians 5:24:

“Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.”³⁰

I want to leave you with a paraphrase of Psalm 136 that was written by Isaac Watts that I think so perfect summarizes this glorious concept of God’s faithfulness as it is pictured in Israel’s ultimate salvation and restoration. Here is what he says.

Give to our God immortal praise!
Mercy and truth are all His ways;
Wonders of might to God belong—
Tell of His glory in your song:

He built the earth, He spread the sky;
He fixed the starry lights on high;
Wonders of pow'r to God belong—
Tell of His greatness in your song:

He sent His Son with pow'r to save
From guilt and darkness and the grave;
Wonders of love to God belong—
Tell of His mercy in your song:

Thro' this vain world He guides our feet
'Til we shall reach His heav'nly seat;
Wonders of grace to God belong—
Tell of His goodness in your song:

And the refrain it says:

For His mercies shall endure Ever faithful, ever sure!
For His mercies shall endure Ever faithful, ever sure!

Let's pray together.

³⁰ 1 Thessalonians 5:24.

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Father, we rejoice in these glorious truths that give such a clear understanding of your character that, indeed, you are a sovereign God, but, oh, you are a faithful God. You are a merciful God, a holy and a transcendent God and therefore we can only bow at your feet and thank you from the depths of our heart for saving us by your grace. May the truths of the gospel be understood by every person within the sound of my voice that they, too, might be saved and, Lord, that we would all live to the praise of your glory. For it is in Jesus' name that I pray. Amen.

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