

All Israel Will Be Saved - Part 3

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 11:25-36

Preached on: Sunday, July 29, 2012

Will you join me this morning by taking your Bibles and turning to Romans chapter 11. This is the third of what will end up being a four part series on the topic “All Israel Will be Saved.” Before I read the text and we examine it closely, I want to draw your attention to the reality of the world in which we live and where it is going. Only the most depraved and naïve in our world would deny that we are in a moral and even economic freefall. We have just had another mass murder in Colorado. Politicians in major cities like Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston are banning Chik-fil-a for not supporting gay marriage and instead supporting the biblical concept of marriage between a man and a woman. I was reading that the homicide rate in Chicago alone is now approaching 250 this year, almost double the number of U S troops killed in Afghanistan over the same period of time. Europe is teetering on economic collapse. In the United States the national debt is now upwards of 16 trillion dollars, increasing 3.9 billion dollars every day with no end in sight. We are heading towards a fiscal cliff. The country is divided in ways that we have never seen before since the civil war. It is divided between the makers and the takers, between race and class. We look at the Middle East and we see that it is a powder keg. Russian and Chinese backed nuclear Iran threatens to destroy Israel. They want to impose an Islamic caliphate over the entire world. And while anti-Semitism is politically incorrect in the United States, anti Israel and anti Zionism is on the rise. It is popular, well accepted. We now have an administration that is obviously hostile towards Israel and friendly towards Islamists hat want to destroy both Israel and the United States.

I could go on and on, but I don't need to, because you get the picture. Many are asking the question: Where in the world are we heading? And the reason why so many people don't know is because they refuse to acknowledge where and why and how the world originated. We don't need to be among the people wondering where the world is headed, because God has told us. And for those of us who know Christ, we have a glorious future.

Most people suppress the very truth that God has made evident within them that he, indeed is the creator, the sustainer, the consummator of all things. They refuse to admit that God has revealed himself through his Word. And so for a few minutes this morning I want to give you the big picture of what God has revealed. And this will help prepare us a little bit better for the astounding truths that we have in our text this morning.

Here, my friends, are the things that our leaders and our public educators and our college professors will not tell you. As we look at the Word of God we learn that before time began, before anything was created, God who is Spirit devised and decreed a plan to bring glory to himself. He created a material universe, the heavens and the earth and all that is within it including man. And he placed man in a magnificent garden, an earthly sanctuary that mirrored his heavenly abode and there he enjoyed sweet fellowship with his creation, but only for a short time. He also created angelic beings that could exercise moral judgment. And he elected some angelic beings to remain forever holy and faithful

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to him. Yet he permitted others to choose to rebel against him and follow their leader Satan who is the head of all of the demons and is to this day. And, as I have said before, though God hates evil, though he hates sin, he ordained it to enter into his perfect universe through the voluntary choices of moral creatures and he had a reason for this and the reason is to dramatically display his glory through his holiness, his wrath, mercy, grace, love and power.

Satan was cast down to earth with his demons and he tempted Adam and Eve and they sinned. The first man Adam brought sin into the world and through his sin, sin spread to all mankind thereafter, separating sinful man from a holy God. But, again, this was the way God planned it. But God foreordained and predestined to reconcile unto himself some men, not all. And God also ordained to allow Satan to be the temporary God of this world, leading men into sin and working evil in the world. And all through Scripture we see that God revealed to us a dual purpose in all that he does. He is going to first of all redeem those he elected to save, those he made the special object of his love and he also has planned to restore all that has been lost in the garden at the fall, taking back what he allowed Satan to usurp.

As planned, about 2100 years before Christ he made a promise to a man named Abraham to bless his family, to be a witness people. He promised that through his seed, through his loins would come a Savior King. He promised that his descendants would have a land, a special territory where God would dwell with them one day. He promised that they would be a great nation, a witness nation. He promised divine blessing and protection upon them.

Then about 600 years later in around 1445 BC God made that family into a nation, the Israelites. And he gave them his law in an effort to help them understand his righteous character and to help them see that they needed a Savior.

Then about 500 years later as his plan unfolded in history, about 1000 BC, he made another promise to one of Abraham's descendants, to David, a promise of an eternal kingdom whereby David's throne would ultimately belong to his descendant the greater Son of David, the Messiah who we know as the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then, later, about 400 years in 600 BC, roughly, he gave Abraham's descendants yet a fourth promise, a new covenant of redemption. We read about it in Jeremiah 31 whereby through Israel God's very Son would purchase their redemption and restore them to their land. But then their Messiah came, we know that they rejected him and therefore God temporarily set that nation aside and he judged them severely, scattering them around the world to be dispersed among the peoples of the world. But all of this was according to his original plan as he prophesied in his Word.

With the nation of Israel temporarily set aside, but not forgotten, not abandoned, God created a mystical body that would respond to the head, the Lord Jesus Christ. This body

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was also called the bride of Christ, his bridal Church made up predominantly of Gentiles. They would become the new custodians of divine truth temporarily and we now live in this dispensation of history.

But God has revealed that at the end of the Church age, God has promised that he is going to remove his bridal Church from the earth and once again he is going to turn his attention to his beloved enemy Israel that he set aside temporarily. No, dear friends, the world is not spinning out of control. It is spinning precisely in the direction that God decreed in eternity past. God has revealed these truths all through his Word, especially in the book of Revelation, the *αποκαλυψις ησου χριστου*.

αποκαλυψις (ap-ok-al'-oop-sis) is Greek word. It is made up of a couple of words, *απο* (apo') which means to take away and *καλυπτω* (kal-ooop'-to) which means a cover. So what revelation is, is the taking away or the uncovering of something, the laying bare, a disclosure of that which has been concealed.

In the book of Revelation we have a revealing of divine truth from God that lays bear that which has been hidden regarding the last days of human history, where the world is heading and the eternal state.

Let me give you a brief chronology of what is to come according to the book of Revelation and many other passages of Scripture. After the Church has been translated into heaven at the rapture of the Church, God is going to resume the final seven years of judgment upon Israel. This is known as Daniel's 70th week.

In Daniel 9:24 we read:

“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place.”¹

The rest of that prophecy goes on to reveal to us that 69 weeks of years of judgment have already been completed. But one more week of years remains, a period known as the tribulation. And today we await the rapture of the Church. It could happen at any moment.

During the first half of the tribulation, the first three and a half years, the antichrist will rise to power. He will sign a peace covenant with Israel and that will really trigger the tribulation. The Jewish temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem where they will worship and resume the sacrificial system, still mostly in unbelief of Christ. During the first half of the tribulation, the seal and the trumpet judgments will be poured out upon the earth causing

¹ Daniel 9:24.

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catastrophic destruction and earth. In fact, by the end of the tribulation, the vast majority of the population of the world will be killed. And during that first season of divine judgment in the tribulation the antichrist will coexist with a cohort called the false prophet who will head up a monolithic false religious system and he will use his alleged miracle working abilities to deceive the world into worshipping the antichrist and wearing his mark.

Towards the end of the first half of the tribulation the antichrist will fake his death and resurrection. I find it interesting that even today we see the world being prepared for such a one world ruler, being prepared for a one world religion, a one world economy. We look around and we see an ever increasing number of people being encouraged to be dependent upon the government to care for them from the cradle to the grave. Like robots the masses mindlessly worship politicians who are notorious liars and care only for their own ambitions. Moreover, we look at the religious climate of the world and we can see that religious systems, including, unfortunately, many ostensibly evangelical Christian churches are becoming increasingly ecumenical whereby they sacrifice truth on the altar of tolerance so we can all just kind of get along and love God whoever he or she might be, leaving billions easy prey for the great harlot church that will come about during the days of the tribulation.

By the midpoint of the tribulation the antichrist will violate his covenant with Israel by desecrating the temple. He invades Jerusalem and tramples the temple mount. It is a time known as the abomination of desolation and at that point he will demand that the world worship him. There will be two witnesses that God brings to life during that time. We believe they will be Moses and Elijah. And during that time they will don sackcloth in public mourning over the temple's desecration and they will oppose the antichrist. And it will be during that period, in the mid point of the tribulation that you will begin to see many Jews in Israel begin to understand the gospel of Christ and be saved.

By that time the antichrist will be exposed. By that time the faithful witness of the two witnesses and the 144,000 that God will raise up, those evangelists will begin to bear much fruit. During the first half or I should say the last half of the tribulation the final seven bowl judgments will be poured out upon the earth and they will be poured out and plague those that worship the beast. It will wreak havoc upon the ecosystems of the world causing man to blaspheme God. During these final days of human suffering the antichrist will expand his empire to include 10 other regions, each having its own ruler, its own administration as they serve him. And their ultimate goal will be to eradicate all Jews, many of which, by this time, will be worshippers of Christ as well as all Gentile believers. And they will wage war against the Lamb at the battle of Armageddon. The antichrist will move against Jerusalem in a Satanic plot to destroy the Jews. Many will have fled from that region, but others will stay and fight, possibly with the help of the two witnesses. And ultimately half of the city will fall to the forces of the antichrist. A Jewish remnant will occupy the eastern part of the city with the temple mount and the two witnesses will be killed and their bodies will be put on public display.

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The wicked in the world will rejoice thinking that God has finally been defeated. After three and a half days, however, they will rise from the dead and be translated into heaven causing the world to be absolutely terrified at what they see. And then, according to Bible prophecy, in the hour of Israel's greatest peril, the Messiah King, the Lord Jesus Christ will return and defend the remnant of his people whom he will reconcile unto himself in saving faith. He will bring deliverance to Jerusalem and he will judge the nations. And as result of that siege of Jerusalem, combined with just the devastating fury of the Lord's return, two thirds of those that remain in the nation of Israel will perish in their sins. And the remaining one third, including that 144,000 witnesses that he had raised up will experience the removal of the judicial hardening that God has placed upon the, because of their unbelief and they will be saved and they will enter into the kingdom, according to Zechariah 13.

The Holy Spirit will then be poured out upon them causing them to repent and be saved. It will be at that time, dear friends, that the Lord Jesus Christ that the world mocks, the Messiah will descend upon the Mount of Olives in unimaginable triumph and that mountain will split in two creating a massive valley leading from the temple mount to the desert, a valley through which many of the Jews will flee to safety.

And then there appears to be a transition between the tribulation and the millennial kingdom, an interval of 75 days according to Daniel 12 and Revelation 12. And during that time the Messiah King will exercise his regal authority, the antichrist and the false prophet will be thrown alive into the lake of fire, the abomination of desolation and the temple will be removed according to Daniel 12. The Gentile nations will be judged as Jesus said in Matthew 25 and Satan will be bound and temporarily incarcerated. Old Testament and tribulation saints will be resurrected.

At that point the Messiah will reign upon a renovated earth for a thousand years as promised and he will do so with his covenant people that have now been restored unto him. This will be a time when the nation itself will be restored yet again to its ancient place of divine favor and supremacy.

Now we could ask: Why would God do all of this? Well, certainly because he is going to be faithful to his promises, but the main reason, dear friends, is because God from the beginning has had a plan to bring glory to himself.

During the tribulation, in time of world wide revival, messengers from Jerusalem will go forth and preach the gospel, despite the tyranny of the antichrist and many will be saved. Why would he do this? To give God glory. The prophet Isaiah reminds us of this in chapter 24 beginning with verse 14.

They raise their voices, they shout for joy. They cry out from the west concerning the majesty of the LORD. Therefore glorify the LORD in the

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east, The name of the LORD, the God of Israel In the coastlands of the sea. From the ends of the earth we hear songs, "Glory to the Righteous One,"²

What is the ultimate purpose in God's sovereign, faithful, merciful dealings with Israel? Dear friends, it is to bring glory to himself. Isaiah chapter 44 beginning in verse 23 we read more of this time.

"Shout for joy, O heavens, for the LORD has done it! Shout joyfully, you lower parts of the earth; Break forth into a shout of joy, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it; For the LORD has redeemed Jacob And in Israel He shows forth His glory."³

Now, my friends, with this historical overview of God's plan as he has revealed it in his Word, we come again to the climax of Paul's explanation of God's gracious plan of redemption for his covenant people Israel.

You will remember that in Romans chapter nine he speaks of Israel's election, chapter 10 of their defection and chapter 11 of their salvation which will ultimately fulfill his purpose in choosing them in the first place. You will recall that God declared through his servant Jeremiah in Jeremiah 13:11:

"...that they might be for Me a people, for renown, for praise, and for glory."⁴

It is not the case today, but it will be some day soon.

Now in light of this, let me read this section of Scripture and we will focus on a few of these verse yet again this morning, beginning in Romans 11 verse 25.

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; 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, 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, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also

² Isaiah 24:14-16.

³ Isaiah 44:23.

⁴ Jeremiah 13:11.

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may now be shown mercy. For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might 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.⁵

In this section of Scripture Paul humbles arrogant saints by exalting four attributes of God which glorifies his name. We are humbled by his severing grace, by his unfailing faithfulness, by his infinite mercy and by his incomprehensible holiness.

By way of reminder, we are first humbled by his sovereign grace. You will recall in our study that God sovereignly ordained to harden the hearts of the vast majority of his chosen people, due to their unbelief. Yet he has preserved for himself a remnant of those that he hardened, a remnant for ethnic, national Israel, branches that have been broken off. And those he will one day save en masse. That is why he says in verse 25:

“For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved.”⁶

What is this mystery? It is the mystery of the marvelous chain of events in God’s sovereign purpose to ultimately save and restore Israel to the praise of his glory. We are astounded when we reflect upon God’s sovereign grace for Israel, for all that he has elected by his grace including each of us. So don’t be arrogant, Gentiles. God is not finished with Israel. God has not abandoned his people.

And, secondly, we are humbled by his unfailing faithfulness as we have studied. Remember, after the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, when the last Gentile in the Church age has come to salvation, verse 26:

... 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, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."⁷

⁵ Romans 11:25-36.

⁶ Romans 11:25-26.

⁷ Romans 11:26-27.

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What a picture of God's unfailing faithfulness to do exactly what he promised Abraham all along in that unconditional and unilateral covenant that God made with him, promises that did not depend upon the faithfulness of Abraham or the faithfulness of his descendants, but depended solely upon God himself. So Paul is saying, "Gentiles, don't be arrogant towards Israel. I am revealing to you the mystery of their salvation and restoration based solely upon God's sovereign election and his faithfulness to keep his covenants."

And all of this was based upon God's covenant with them, verse 27.

Verse 28:

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.⁸

Well, this brings us to the third humbling truth that we will focus on this morning. Another truth to humble arrogant Gentiles, as we tend to be, pertaining to Israel's future salvation and restoration and that third truth is that we are humbled by his infinite mercy. Notice verse 30.

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, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.⁹

Now we can all identify with this, hopefully. Prior to salvation we were all disobedient to God and we still struggle with that. Paul tells us in Ephesians chapter two beginning in verse one.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ.¹⁰

⁸ Romans 11:28-29.

⁹ Romans 11:30-31.

¹⁰ Ephesians 2:1-5.

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So, yes. As Paul said in verse 30, we were once disobedient to God, but now we have been shown mercy. The term mercy literally means to see someone in serious need and then have compassion upon that individual. And then that compassion moved to an action whereby one shows some act of kindness on the person in need. And, indeed, we deserve condemnation. God saw that and yet what does he do? He shows mercy towards us and gives us forgiveness. He justifies us.

Psalm 86 verse five. David says:

“For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon Thee.”¹¹

That is the concept of mercy.

Psalm 136:1.

“Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.”¹²

And Peter said in 1 Peter 1:3:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”¹³

Beloved, can there possibly be any greater cure for arrogance than this? How easy it is for us to act in our flesh and with our pride see ourselves as superior to others? Which leads to criticizing them, slandering them, maligning them. As a footnote, I am sure you will agree that the more we see God’s mercy in our life, the more merciful we become to others. To say it a little bit differently, I can say this of myself, the more I see of my own sin, the less I see of yours.

This was at the heart of Gentile arrogance towards Israel. This is what Paul is trying to address. So he calls his readers to reflect upon God’s mercy, but notice something else. This is very important in his argument. At the end of verse 30 he says that Gentiles have been shown mercy because of their disobedience. Disobedience is a term in the original language that speaks of a stubborn unwillingness or refusal to comply with the demands of someone in authority. The term is used, for example in John 3:36 where we read:

“... but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”¹⁴

¹¹ Psalm 86:5.

¹² Psalm 136:1.

¹³ 1 Peter 1:3.

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And, as we read earlier in Ephesians 2:2, unrepentant sinners are referred to as sons of disobedience. In chapter five of Ephesians verse six we read that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Now this is absolutely astounding when you consider it. God is using Israel's disobedience, those that he has temporarily hardened to bring salvation to the Gentiles. Now, of course, this is consistent with what Paul said earlier at the end of verse 11.

“But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.”¹⁵

But I want you to notice something else here in verse 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.”¹⁶

And, again, this goes back to what Paul said in verse 11.

“But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.”¹⁷

In other words, what he is saying is God is using Israel's disobedience to bring salvation to the Gentiles. And then he uses Gentiles to cause the elect to become envious of God's blessing upon the Church to arouse them to yearn to be reconciled to the living God through faith in Christ. So Paul's point here is this. If God would be merciful to pagan Gentiles who were disobedient to him, on what basis could we possibly assume that he would not do the same for his chosen people, his beloved enemies as he calls them in verse 28 who are also disobedient to him?

You see, both Jews and Gentiles are characterized here as disobedient, yet they both receive mercy. So on what basis does any of us have to feel superior? That is Paul's argument.

Do you remember? He began this whole section:

“For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation.”¹⁸

¹⁴ John 3:36.

¹⁵ Romans 11:11.

¹⁶ Romans 11:31.

¹⁷ Romans 11:11.

¹⁸ Romans 11:25.

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In other words, lest you be cocky in your understanding of things based upon your wisdom, based upon your—I am going to expand this a little bit—your hopelessly, bias, finite, arrogant, naïve understanding of things, rather than based upon the revelation of the living God.

“For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved.”¹⁹

I bet you didn't know that, did you? Well, now you do. That is the point. So God is saying, “Yes, Israel was disobedient. That is part of my plan. I judicially hardened most of them, but not all of them. And then I turned to the Gentiles who were equally disobedient and I have chosen to save some, but not all of them. I extended undeserved mercy to both groups who hated and rebelled against me. But one day when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, I am going to once again turn my attention towards my beloved enemy Israel and I am going to show mercy on some, not all of them, that I have hardened and they will be saved en masse. I am going to restore them to their land just like I promised, because I want the world to see that I am the Lord, the God of Israel. I want to bring glory to myself in that triumph. I am going to restore that nation to its ancient place of divine favor and preeminence in the messianic kingdom. I promised this all along.”

Now notice something fascinating here in verse 32. He says:

“For God has shut up all in disobedience.”²⁰

That is a curious statement. Both Jews and Gentiles, he is saying, are imprisoned in this disobedience. And as we look at Scripture we see that God has so ordered man's existence that all men are disobedient by nature and, thus, they show themselves to be sinners.

Now I might add that this is a really hard passage for those who are desperate to preserve the freedom of the human will and make moral choices while at the same time in their mind clearly God of any blame for causing evil to enter the world.

Many will argue that God merely allowed Satan and Adam and Eve to make their own decisions without any divine intervention and then God just reacted to what they did. On the basis of their sin, therefore, he developed his plan of redemption. This is just a classic Arminian position, that God somehow subordinates his will to the will of man. The problem with that, is that is just not what Scripture teaches. This is evident right here in this text.

¹⁹ Romans 11:25-26.

²⁰ Romans 11:32.

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“For God has shut up all in disobedience.”²¹

It is even the testimony of God himself throughout Scripture. For example, Isaiah 45 verse seven:

“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.”²²

May I remind you that Jesus, according to Acts 2:23 was delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God. Again, God ordained the greatest act of evil in the history of the world to occur and that is what happened. Notwithstanding the inscrutable mystery of the interplay between God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility, beloved, the biblical record makes it clear that God has ordained evil to exist in his created order as an integral part of his plan and purpose to bring glory to himself. As I stated earlier, while God is holy and he is certainly never the cause of sin, he ordained it to enter his perfect universe through the voluntary choices of moral creatures. Why? In order to dramatically display his glory through his holiness, through his wrath, mercy, grace, love and power. That is precisely Paul’s point here.

Verse 32.

“For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.”²³

Now think about it. Had God not ordained for evil to enter his perfect universe, man would have never sinned, right? And God could have made us all perfect. He could have made us that way, meaning that we would never sin. If he hadn't ordained evil to enter into his perfect universe, man would have never been in spiritual bondage, a bondage from which he could never free himself. But God ordained to allow this to happen. Why? In order to demonstrate his mercy to the world and specifically to those who trust in Christ as the only hope of their salvation.

Ask yourself. Why did Christ die for sinners? Why did he do that? Because of his great love for those who were shut up in disobedience. Gentile believers were once incarcerated in this prison, but they received mercy as a result of Israel’s disobedience. In the same way Israel’s disobedience opened up the possibility of their receiving mercy as a result of God’s present mercy to the Gentiles. And this, of course, is what evokes this explosion of praise that follows in verses 33 through 36.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Isaiah 45:7.

²³ Romans 11:32.

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But let's back up for a moment. I don't want you to lose the big picture of Paul's argument concerning just this humbling reality of Israel's future salvation and restoration.

Does God keep his promises? Absolutely he does. Why? Because of his sovereign grace, because of his unfailing faithfulness, because of his infinite mercy. This is all part of his sovereign plan.

May I remind you that in the book of Deuteronomy God there renews his covenant with his chosen people? He restates the obligations that they had to be a missionary nation to a pagan world. In chapter four verse 40 he says:

"So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time."²⁴

But God's blessing upon them in the land was contingent upon their obedience. You read about that in chapters 27 and 28. But God knew before hand that they were going to be disobedient. He didn't only just know it, he ordained it. It was no surprise to him.

Deuteronomy 31 verse 16.

"And the LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers; and this people will arise and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land, into the midst of which they are going, and will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them.'"²⁵

This was all part of his plan. He knew what was going to happen. Chapter 31 verse 21 at the end he says:

"...for I know their intent which they are developing today, before I have brought them into the land which I swore."²⁶

None of this was a surprise to him. God revealed all this to Moses from the beginning. He revealed to him not only what he had ordained, but why he ordained it. He revealed this to Moses, remember, when Moses said to Israel in chapter four verse 30:

"When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice. "For the LORD your God is a compassionate God."²⁷

²⁴ Deuteronomy 4:40.

²⁵ Deuteronomy 31:16.

²⁶ Deuteronomy 31:21.

²⁷ Deuteronomy 4:31.

All Israel Will Be Saved - Part 3

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 11:25-36
Preached on: Sunday, July 29, 2012

That is the term for mercy.

“He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.”²⁸

Oh, child of God, don't miss this. Can there be any greater display of God's mercy than in his dealings with Israel? Over and over again the prophets herald just the spiritual resuscitation that will take place in Israel when she is regathered from among the nations, first in unbelief and then later in belief, because of his mercy.

Ezekiel heralds this great truth in Ezekiel 36 verse 25. He says:

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.²⁹

And then in Ezekiel 37 beginning at verse 21 that we read earlier this morning:

And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes. And say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations, and they will no longer be divided into two kingdoms. And they will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God.”³⁰

Isaiah tells us in chapter 35 verse 10:

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ezekiel 36:25-28.

³⁰ Ezekiel 37:20-23.

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“And the ransomed of the LORD will return, And come with joyful shouting to Zion, With everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, And sorrow and sighing will flee away.”³¹

As a footnote, for those of you who believe that the Church has replaced Israel, I would ask you based on this verse: When will the Church come to Zion? Or if Zion is spiritualized to refer to heaven, then explain to me how Church can return to a place it has never been?

No, dear friends, the prophets are not speaking of the Church here, but of the salvation and restoration of national, ethnic Israel.

Zechariah, whose name means whom God remembers also speaks of the covenant faithfulness of an infinitely merciful God when Messiah will dwell in Jerusalem on the throne of David during the millennium. He says in chapter two of Zechariah beginning at verse 10:

"Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," declares the LORD. "And many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. And the LORD will possess Judah as His portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem. Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD; for He is aroused from His holy habitation."³²

Oh, dear Christian, be humbled by God's infinite mercy as we see it played out in his plan of redemption with Israel as it is dramatically displayed in all of his dealings with his beloved enemy. And may I challenge you today to be deeply humbled by God's mercy in your life, a mercy that should motivate you to praise as we are going to see the next time we are together. That is what happens in the closing verses here of chapter 11. Because of God's mercy Paul just can't contain himself any longer. But not only should God's mercy motivate us to praise, but it should also motivate us to present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice as he is going to go on to explain beginning in chapter 12.

I wish to leave you with the words of Paul as he describes his testimony of God's mercy in his life. 1 Timothy one beginning at the end of verse 15. He says:

...that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me

³¹ Isaiah 35:10.

³² Zechariah 2:10-13.

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as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.³³

Let's pray together.

Father, we are humbled by these great truths. We are humbled by the reality that your mercy and grace is offered to every sinner no matter how wretched, even as Paul has described himself. And we could all identify with that. We were all dead in our sins, enslaved by our lusts. And what mercy we see in your perfect patience towards us, Lord, I pray that our lives will reflect your mercy as we show mercy to others. And, Lord, I pray that our testimony will be an example to others so that they will believe in him for eternal life. We ask all of this in the precious name of our Savior, even so come quickly, Lord Jesus. Amen.

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³³ 1 Timothy 1:15-16.