

Romans 11:25-29 (NKJV)

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

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

27 For this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins."

1

Rom 11:28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.

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

2

- Israel has been cast aside by God for a 2,000-year time-out, as a result of the nation's disobedience in rejecting Messiah and His offer of kingdom inheritance

- The "silver lining," so to speak:

Rom 11:15 For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

- As a result of Israel being cast aside for a time, God has reconciled the entire world to Himself through Jesus Christ

3

- Because God has reconciled mankind to Himself, we can reconcile with God – for reconciliation is a two-way street – by believing on His Son Jesus Christ and choosing to live righteously

2 Cor 5:15 He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

- Christians should especially be living righteously!
- Are you? You will give an account for your life when you meet Jesus!

4

Rom 11:12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

- Gentiles have been enriched as a result of Israel's *fall*, which means *transgression* – how so?
- v. 11 *salvation* has come to the Gentiles
- The *salvation* here is not initial salvation, for that has always been available to the Gentiles

5

Salvation in the context of Romans is two-fold:

a) ongoing *salvation of the soul* – i.e., sanctification unto reward, and

b) *deliverance* from God's temporal wrath, because those whose souls are being saved are living righteously

- This is the gospel (good news) of kingdom inheritance for those who live righteously
- That has now been extended to the Gentiles because of Israel's transgression (Matt. 21:43)

6

- This is all wonderful news for the whole world! But there is even better news:
- Israel's time-out is merely temporary – for 2,000 years
- God prophesied of this in the OT, but the prophets did not fully understand what it all meant, because of *prophetic foreshortening*
- In other words, the prophets could see something glorious coming for Israel, the Messianic kingdom, but they thought it was imminent

7

- What they did not realize is that Messiah would come a first time to die on the cross for mankind and be resurrected, then return a second time to launch His kingdom
- The 2,000 years in between would be Israel's time-out for rejecting the Messiah and His kingdom offer ...
- During which time God would extend the offer of kingdom inheritance to the Church, the one new man in Christ, comprised of both Jews and Gentiles who have embraced Jesus and His eternal life

8

- Then near the end of that 2,000-year period, the final 7 years would be a time of tribulation to bring national Israel to repentance – the prophet Hosea speaks of this:

Hos 5:15 "I will return again to My place till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me."

- From the book of Daniel, we know this is Daniel's 70th week, which completes Jewish history, culminating in the nation's repentance

9

Hosea speaks of Israel's return to the Lord:

Hos 6:1 Come, and let us return to the LORD; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up.

2 After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight.

Peter gives the key to interpreting these "days":

2 Pet 3:8 Beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

10

- These two days are two thousand years, and the third day is the implementation of the Messianic kingdom, with Israel restored and placed as ruler over all the nations on Earth
- Paul develops the theme of Israel's present disobedience and future repentance, and the effect on the Gentiles

Rom 11:16 For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

11

Rom. 11:17-18 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

- Paul uses the metaphor of an olive tree to describe Israel
- But he starts with the metaphor of a *lump of dough* (v. 16), or it could be a *lump of clay*

12

- The lump represents the entirety of Israel
- God makes clear that, at its core, Israel remains HOLY, for the nation is the elect of God, despite its disobedience in rejecting Messiah
- The FIRSTFRUIT in the opening illustration is likely the remnant – those Jews who have embraced Jesus as Messiah
- They are also holy and will be raptured with the church, several years before national Israel's repentance

13

Zane Hodges, Commentary:

The believing remnant should be construed as a kind of *first fruits* which prefigure the future transformation of the entire *batch of dough*, that is, of the entire nation. For ultimately “*all Israel will be delivered*” (11:26). The holy status that now pertains to the first fruits will someday pertain to the complete batch of dough.

14

- In the latter half of v. 16, Paul changes metaphors to an olive tree and its branches
- The root of the tree is HOLY – again, referring to national Israel overall – which means the branches are holy
- But there's a problem – some of the branches have been broken off, referring to the national rejection of Jesus as Messiah
- But branches of a wild olive tree – representing saved Gentiles – have been grafted into the tree

15

- Paul warns the Gentiles not to boast about their spiritual windfall, since it is the Israelite tree and roots that are the source of their spiritual vitality
- Keep in mind the ethnic hostility between the Jewish believers and Gentile believers in the church at Rome
- Some of the Greeks were gloating in Israel's downfall, thinking it was permanent
- But Paul reminds them that Israel will rise again, and the holy roots are evidence of this

16

- The roots are likely a reference to Abraham, whom Paul has already used as an illustration of righteous living by faith in ch. 4
 - Without Israel, and without the righteous legacy of father Abraham, they would not have the life God has given them
- Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

17

Zane Hodges, Commentary:

With these two vivid metaphors Paul manages to look both forward and backward. The metaphor of the first fruits points to a future reality, while the metaphor of the root points to the past, that is, to the nation's origin. However viewed, whether in terms of its future destiny or in terms of its beginning, Israel is holy.

18

Rom 11:19 You will say then, “Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.”

20 Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.

21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.

- Israel’s branches were broken off because of their *unbelief*
- Gentiles have been grafted in because of their *faith*

19

- So Paul urges Gentiles to be humble and grateful, seeing God has graciously allowed you to be engrafted into Israel’s tree, so to speak

- Needless to say, this illustration should have quashed any thinking on the part of the Gentiles that Israel’s demise was permanent

- Paul warns the Gentiles not to be arrogant, but fear, for if God didn’t spare Israel, He may not spare Gentiles either

- The implication: “Keep standing in faith!”

20

Zane Hodges, Commentary:

A case can be made that this change in Gentile responsiveness is already far advanced. Today the Gentile world largely rejects the gospel *in the form in which it was preached by Paul and by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself*. That is not the same as saying that Christendom has disappeared. It has not, but its message is no longer really the message that Paul proudly preached (Rom 1:16-17).

21

Zane Hodges, Commentary:

As a matter of fact, Jesus prophesied this degeneration in the parables of Matt 13 ... The truth of God, like three measures of wheat flour, is now fully mixed with the leaven of false doctrine (Matt 13:33; cf. Matt 16:12). Gentile failure is thus more and more evident as time passes.

- Of course, Hodges is referring to the *gospel of kingdom inheritance* and the *salvation of the soul*, which is rarely preached any more, particularly since the Reformation

22

- As Gentiles, we should regularly stop to think about all the wonderful blessings that have been extended to us through Israel
- We have a personal relationship with Jesus, the Jewish Messiah
- His Holy Spirit lives within us
- We have the Holy Scriptures
- And we have a glorious future, because God has promised Israel a glorious future
- All of this was part of His plan from before the foundation of the world – marvelous!

23

Paul’s warning gets stiffer in vs. 22-23:

Rom 11:22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.

23 And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

- *severity* = “a sharp, abrupt cutting off”

24

- Paul essentially says to the Gentiles: “God has been good to you and severe in cutting off Israel. But the tables will be turned, and you will find yourselves cut off abruptly if you do not continue in faith.”
- Indeed, this will happen in the tribulation
- Gentile coldness toward the gospel of kingdom inheritance signals the fulfillment of what Jesus prophesied in His parable – the loaf is nearly leavened

25

Zane Hodges, *Commentary*:

Paul’s ... words in Rom 11:17-24 are in effect a prophecy about the future even though they are couched in the form of a warning to Gentile humanity. But Paul obviously knew that this warning would be ignored (as it already has been) and that the ancient promises to his nation would truly come to pass. Today it is only a matter of time before this prophecy catches up with Gentile self-satisfaction and pride.

26

- Consequently, just as Israel’s time-out is temporary, so the Gentiles’ being grafted into the olive tree is temporary
- Gentile faith has nearly lapsed – as evidenced by widescale rejection of the kingdom inheritance offer
- The 2,000 years is near the end, the rapture is soon to occur, and the tribulation about to begin
- Thus, Paul’s warning to the Gentiles is about to become the fulfillment of prophecy

27

Rom 11:24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

- Seeing that Gentiles were cut out of a wild olive tree and grafted into Israel’s cultivated olive tree (which is not the natural order of grafting), HOW MUCH MORE will Israel – which are the natural branches – be re-grafted into their own tree

28

- Indeed, when the tribulation begins, the ones who will carry the message of kingdom inheritance around the world will be the 144,000 Jewish preachers that God has called to spread this message, *not* Gentiles
- There is coming a day in which Israel will be grafted back into the olive tree!

Rom 11:25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

29

Jan Bonda, *The One Purpose of God*:

Paul refers to a *mystery*. He summarizes its content. First, there is the hardening of part of Israel. Then, there is the coming in of the “fullness” of the Gentiles. Finally, there is the salvation of all Israel. This fully agrees with the imagery of the olive tree. The hardening of part of Israel is the cutting off of part of the branches. The coming in of the fullness of the Gentiles is the grafting of the wild shoots. And the salvation of all Israel is the grafting in of the branches that had been cut off.

30

- All of this was a mystery and could not be fathomed by the Gentiles at Rome (and probably elsewhere)
- Because of Israel's rejection of Messiah, the Gentile believers thought God was finished with Israel and that going forward, they – the Gentiles exclusively – would be God's people through Jesus
- The re-grafting of Israel back into its own national tree was a mystery in the OT and, therefore, to the first century church, until Paul gave this new revelation in Rom. 9-11

31

- The prophets foresaw Israel's ascension as head of the nations, but they did not see Israel's setting aside, being broken off as branches for 2,000 years, while the Gentiles were to be given the opportunity to embrace the kingdom inheritance message
- They did not know about Israel's 2-millennia-long spiritual blindness
- For that matter, the kingdom inheritance message was also a mystery

32

- Paul wants the church at Rome to understand that Israel will be returning – re-grafted back into its own olive tree
 - That will occur *when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in*
- Two incorrect views on the meaning of this:
1. Some amillennialists take millennial passages in the OT – such as Isa. 2:1-4, about Gentile nations flocking to Zion to worship Jesus – as the fulfillment of Gentile grafting in, at least those who are “elected” to be saved (the view of replacement theology)

33

- But that is a misinterpretation of millennial texts, for we know God promised Abraham that ALL the nations of the earth would be blessed *through him* (i.e., through Israel), *not* through the Gentiles
 - And Paul said ALL Israel will be saved (not merely so-called elect Gentile surrogates)
- Two incorrect views on the meaning of this:
2. Many dispensationalists, say this is referring to the end of the church age, when all have been saved who are going to be saved – and by *saved* they mean *regenerated*

34

- Then the rapture of the church takes place
- This has led some to believe there will be a great evangelistic harvest just before Jesus returns
- But I can't find any Scripture to support this
- I personally believe – in light of the previous verses – that the phrase – *when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in* – is referring to the end of the Holy Spirit's search for, and calling out of, the sons to glory, those saints who are faithful and therefore chosen to be Christ's rulers in the next age

35

- It seems this process will end at the same time that kingdom inheritance becomes fully leavened – and we are very close to that
- This is typified in the OT by Abraham's servant procuring the Gentile bride for Isaac
- Once the bride was found, the search ended, and the bride was wed to her husband
- And so it will be at the end of this age of the church, while Israel is temporarily cast aside
- When God has found the bride for His Son, the fullness of the Gentiles will have come in, and the rapture will occur

36

Arlen Chitwood, *Judgment Seat of Christ*:

"The fulness of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:25) ... is an expression referring to a work of God among the Gentiles ... This activity involves God turning His attention to the Gentiles "to take out of them a people for his name" (Acts 15:14).

God brings "the fulness of the Gentiles" to pass during the present dispensation through placing believing Gentiles together in the same body with believing Jews, forming the one new man "in Christ" (cf. Eph. 2:12-15; 3:1-6).

37

Arlen Chitwood, *Judgment Seat of Christ*:

During the present dispensation, the Spirit of God is in the world searching for a bride for God's Son who will reign as consort queen with Him during the Messianic Era. And the bride is being taken from the one new man "in Christ," made up mainly of individuals removed from the Gentiles rather than from the Jews (though individuals removed from the Jews are included).

38

Arlen Chitwood, *Judgment Seat of Christ*:

God's removal of "a people for his name," from among the Gentiles, is for purposes involving the government of the earth ... to exercise supremacy over the nations during the coming age.

- **Until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, Israel remains in blindness**
- **Remember the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, on the very day of Christ's resurrection?**

39

- **Their eyes were blinded to the OT prophecies, and they were dismayed at Christ's crucifixion**
- **Though they had heard of the empty tomb, they think the worse, not believing that He had risen**
- **Then Jesus anonymously joins them on their journey and teaches them from the OT law and prophets while walking along with them**
- **When they finally arrive at their home, Jesus prays and breaks the bread**

40

- **It is only at that point, that their eyes are opened, they understand the Scriptures, and they realize instantly that they have been with Jesus**

- **What was the cause of their blindness?**

Luke 24:25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!"

- **They failed to believe the OT Scriptures, and that is national Israel's problem**

41

- **But when Jesus returns the second time at the close of the tribulation, the eyes of the Jews will be opened, and they will recognize Him as Messiah**

Zech 12:10-11 I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem.

42

Thus Paul, quoting Isa. 59:20-21 and 27:9 says:
Rom 11:26-27 And so all Israel will be saved, as
it is written: *“The Deliverer will come out of
Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from
Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when
I take away their sins.”*

- This *salvation* in v. 26 is national deliverance from Israel’s enemies, including antichrist, at the close of the tribulation – as well as deliverance from God’s wrath because “ungodliness” is being turned away from Jacob (Israel)

43

Jan Bonda: Those who were the objects of His wrath (Rom. 9:22) will become the objects of His mercy (11:31-32).

- Israel’s will be healed from blindness, the nation will embrace Jesus as Messiah and will repent of her sins, confessing that Jesus is LORD (see 10:9-13)
- Consequently, Israel will be restored to fellowship with Jehovah, and the New Covenant will be launched, which includes forgiveness of sins

44

- I believe that this statement, *all Israel will be saved*, refers to ALL Israelites from all of history, who will be resurrected according to Ezek. 37, the valley of dry bones prophecy
- Every Israelite who has ever lived will be restored to fellowship and become part of the new covenant
- Otherwise, this statement, *all Israel will be saved* makes no sense

45

Jan Bonda, *The One Purpose of God*:

The only argument adduced against this view is that the dead are excluded from this number. But this exclusion wreaks havoc with the interpretation of Romans 11:26a. Here the faulty exegesis in our tradition of Romans 5:12-21 takes its toll. It denies that God’s redemption in Christ includes all generations since Adam, while this is precisely the point Paul wants to make. If we grasp that, then we know that if Israel will be saved, this will include all Israelites who have died.

46

- Bonda quotes another commentator named Stroter as saying: “Restricting salvation to the last generation ‘would be a purely arbitrary distinction between equally guilty generations of the same people.’ For that reason, ‘this salvation must extend as far into the past as the judgment of the national hardening.’”
- Think about it – for God to save only the last generation of Israelites would not be merciful to all the Israelites who were judged before that time

47

- Tragically, national Israel coming back into favor with God was trampled upon in the Reformation
- Today, there are countless millions in Protestant churches who believe in replacement theology, the teaching that the Church has replaced Israel in a spiritual sense
- That is completely contrary to what Paul is teaching here in Romans 11
- And it has serious ramifications for the salvation of all men

48

Jan Bonda, *The One Purpose of God*:

The teaching that Israel has been replaced by the church as the people of God has, from the beginning, dominated – and derailed – Christendom. For when the church no longer anticipated the salvation of all Israel, she changed her thinking about God. This was inevitable: The God who drops His own people because of its disobedience and chooses another people is not the kind of God who will save a disobedient world. He becomes a God who wants to save only a few from the mass of humanity.

49

Jan Bonda, *The One Purpose of God*:

Thus the doctrine of election could find acceptance. The wonderful expectation described by Paul that the coming of Christ and of God's children would set creation free, disappeared. This had been the theme of the hymns of praise of the early church. When there is hope that Israel – disobedient Israel – will be saved, there is hope that the world will be saved. That joy, however, has been smothered. The hope for the world has lost its foundation.

50

Jan Bonda, *The One Purpose of God*:

The church, which had substituted herself for Israel, operated with a shortened expectation of the future ... The revelation of the children of God was not to be the beginning of the saving kingly rule of Christ but its end. He would come, so the church taught, not to save the lost world but to condemn the world. Ever since, the church has been perplexed about the prayer, *Thy kingdom come!*

51

Rom 11:28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.

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

- Though the future is bright for Israel, they are presently enemies of the gospel
- We must remember that Paul is referring to the gospel of kingdom inheritance

52

- Nevertheless, they are beloved for the sake of the fathers, that is, the patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
- God loved those men and called Israel through their lineage
- So the Gentiles always need to remember that while Israel is presently in opposition to the gospel, they are the apple of God's eye
- Furthermore, His *gifts* (which are lists in 9:4-5) and *calling* upon this special nation, are irrevocable (v. 29)

53

- God has a plan for Israel; He will fulfill it!
- As Gentiles, what should be our takeaway from this teaching of Paul about Israel?
- Two things – the first is found in vs. 30-32

Rom 11:30-31 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.

Rom 11:32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

54

- Incidentally, the KJV translates the words *disobedient* and *disobedience* as *unbelief*, but I think *disobedience* is more accurate, and so does Hodges
- Thayer says this Gr. word *apeitheia* means “*disobedience, obstinacy*,” and in the N.T. particularly “*obstinate opposition to the divine will*”; BDAG concurs

55

Paul’s point:

- “Just as you Gentiles were once disobedient to God, but you have obtained God’s mercy because Israel became disobedient, so Israel’s disobedience to God will one day lead to God’s mercy being bestowed upon them.
- “For God has committed ALL – both Jews and Gentiles – to disobedience so He might bestow mercy on all mankind.”

56

- BDAG says this word translated *committed* is the idea of being “given over to disobedience”
- In Luke 5:6 the word is translated *caught*, referring to fish caught in a net, thus:
- God has allowed all men to be caught in the net of their own disobedience – both Jews and Gentiles – so He might show His mercy to all mankind – including all those who have died! He is going to resurrect all men and lead “them back to obedience and to be merciful to them” (Bonda)

57

Jan Bonda, *The One Purpose of God*:

Romans 11:32 is the finale of Paul’s unfolding of the gospel, in which he summarizes his entire argument: All people have become disobedient, and all will find mercy with God. This is confirmed by the song of praise that immediately follows ... This praise comprises all of creation, and ends with the words: “To Him are all things” (v. 36). From the beginning of this letter the apostle emphasized that God wants to save all people without distinction (Rom. 3:23-24) ...

58

Jan Bonda, *The One Purpose of God*:

The story does not end with God’s mercy toward Israel. For what God did for Israel is only the beginning of what he will do for all nations. Then the prophecies will be fulfilled: He will forever destroy death and He will wipe away the tears from all faces (Isa. 25:8). This is the mercy toward all who have been disobedient as described by Paul in Romans 11:32.

59

As Gentiles, what should be our takeaway from this teaching of Paul about Israel?

1. God’s purpose is to allow all men to be given over to their own disobedience, so that He might bestow His mercy on all men
 2. We should praise God for His riches and wisdom and knowledge and inscrutability!
- His ways and purposes are far above us, yet He ordered these things regarding mankind before the foundation of the world, and He is carrying out His purposes

60

Rom 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

34 "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?"

35 "Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?"

- v. 34 is a quote from Isa. 40:13
- v. 35 is a quote from Job 41:11

61

Zane Hodges, Commentary:

Paul is moved by the profundity of a divine wisdom that can rise so far above the tragedy and evil of human disobedience and unbelief. And precisely because the divine plan was drawn from the wealth of God's wisdom and knowledge, it was previously a "mystery" (v 25). It was therefore utterly unknowable apart from being revealed to men.

62

Zane Hodges, Commentary:

The "mystery" of Israel's hardening (v 25) was God's secret ("Who indeed has known the mind of the Lord?") and was in no way a result of human "counsel" or "advice" ("Or who has been His counselor?"). At the same time, God's plans for Israel do not flow from any merit on Israel's part, as though they had given Him something He needed to repay ("Or who has given first to Him, so that it shall be paid back to him?"). God's actions toward His ancient people, as well as toward the Gentiles, are pure and simple products of His mercy.

63

Paul closes with a triumphant verse of praise:
11:36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

- Some refer to this as a doxology
- Hodges points out that in the Greek of Paul's day, the term "all things" referred to the universe
- Thus, Paul is moved by God being the *source* of all things (in the universe), and the *facilitator* of all things (in the universe), and the *recipient* of all things (in the universe)

64

Why Paul sings this "doxology":

Bonda: The olive tree in its fullness is greater and richer than before: It is the tree with all the original branches and the numerous new branches that have been grafted in.

- Accordingly, God receives all the glory! Amen!
- Is *your* life glorifying Him?

65