

99. The Book of Romans 11:25-36

Paul's Epistle to the Romans

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

(8-13-25)

Find this week's Study Audio & Video [Here](#)

Tonight, we finish up the fourth major section of the Book of Romans:

IV. Restoration (of Israel)—Chapters 9-11

So, Paul set out in Romans 9-11 to focus his attention on Israel as a way to prove God's promises to them hadn't failed and neither will His promises to His Church fail.

Romans 11:13–24 (NKJV)

¹³ For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, ¹⁴ if by any means I may provoke to jealousy *those who are* my flesh and save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their being cast away *is* the reconciling of the world, what *will* their acceptance *be* but life from the dead? ¹⁶ For if the firstfruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*; and if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches. ¹⁷ 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, ¹⁸ do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, *remember that* you do not support the root, but the root *supports* you. 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.

Remember, this is not talking about God choosing *individual* people for salvation, but of God choosing a *nation* by making a covenant with Abraham and his descendants (the nation of Israel) to be a special instrument to use as a light to the Gentiles.

Here's the main problem when people apply what Paul is saying to the salvation of individual people.

They interpret the '*roots*' as a reference to Israel; the '*olive tree trunk*' as a reference to '*salvation*' and the '*branches*' as speaking of individual people. As such, they interpret the branches being broken off as a reference to people losing their salvation instead of the nation of Israel being set aside for a time from being God's chosen instrument to carry the light of God's truth to the world.

When Paul says in verse 21—"For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either", he is saying that if the Church isn't faithful in representing God by being a light to this fallen world—He will remove us and replace the Church with Israel once again to be His light to the world.

Romans 11:22–24 (NKJV)

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. 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?

When Paul said that the **roots of the tree** support the tree (verse 18)—he was referring to the covenant promises God made with Abraham.

From Abraham came the patriarchs, Isaac, and Jacob (the trunk of the tree) and from Jacob came the 12 tribes, from which came all their descendants (the branches—made up of true believers and apostate Jews)—the wild olive branches signify the Church collectively consisting of true believers and false or apostate Christians.

Israel was to be a light to the world—but they failed and were replaced by the Church.

It is worth noting that, according to Bible prophecy, the professing Gentile church will be “*cut off*” because of apostasy (cut off from being God’s chosen instrument to bring the gospel to the world)—the true Church will be raptured.

1 Timothy 4 and 2 Timothy 3, along with 2 Thessalonians 2—all indicate that the professing Church in the last days will depart from the faith.

One author—

“There is no hope for the apostate church, but there is hope for apostate Israel! Why? Because of the roots of the olive tree. God will keep His promises to the patriarchs, but God will break off the Gentiles because of their unbelief.

No matter how far Israel may stray from the truth of God, the roots are still good. God is still the “God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exodus 3:6; Matthew 22:23). He will keep His promises to these patriarchs. This means that the olive tree will flourish again!”

Romans 11:25 (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.

The Greek word translated ‘**mystery**’ is ‘mysterion’ which means—‘*something that was previously hidden but now God has revealed*’ (like the Rapture Paul reveals in 1 Corinthians 15:51).

Paul speaks of several mysteries in his writings that God revealed to him that he then shared with the Christians he ministered to.

The main one that he is dealing with here with regard to the future restoration of Israel is the mystery he reveals in verse 25 that: **“Blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”**

This **blindness**, of course, is only directed at *unbelieving* Jews—those who refuse to accept Jesus as their Messiah (and Savior) and embrace the gospel of grace. But as Paul goes on to say—this blindness is only *temporary*, only until the full number of Gentiles come to Christ at which time the Rapture will take place.

Then God will lift the *judicial blindness* from Israel and Jews will start getting saved as God brings Israel out of her 2000 year ‘*timeout*’ and uses them as those who will primarily bring the light of the gospel to the world during the Tribulation Period.

Warren Wiersbe—

“Today, God in His grace is visiting the Gentiles and taking out a people for His name (Acts 15:12–14). Individual Jews are being saved, of course; but this present age is primarily a time when God is visiting the Gentiles and building His church. When this present age has run its course, and the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, then God will once more deal with the nation of Israel.”

Now, please don't confuse the **"fullness of the Gentiles"** with the **"times of the Gentiles"** (Luke 21:24).

The **"fullness of the Gentiles"** coincides with the Rapture—the **"times of the Gentiles"** refers to the entire period of Gentile domination over the Jews, beginning with the Babylonian captivity (2 Chronicles 36:1–21) and ending with Christ's return to the earth to reign.

The **"fullness of the Gentiles"** is a reference to the Church and the Church Age.

The Church was the most important *mystery* that God withheld from the Old Testament saints but revealed through the Apostle Paul—

Romans 16:25–26 (NKJV)

²⁵ Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began ²⁶ but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith...

Ephesians 3:1–6, 9–11 (NKJV)

¹ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—² if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, ³ how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, ⁴ by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), ⁵ which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: ⁶ that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel...⁹ and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; ¹⁰ to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*, ¹¹ according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now, let me speak one last time to this idea that because Israel rejected her Messiah that God rejected the nation and has replaced it with the Church.

Pastor Andy Woods—

"When you get into the subject of the nation of Israel there's always three arguments that people use over and over again to dismiss the idea that God has a future program for Israel.

1. So, the first argument that they say is Israel broke God's covenant and so therefore God cancelled Israel's promises.

The Jews can get saved in the church age but as far as a program of God for the nation where He's going to fulfill their national promises of an earthly kingdom, they're saying that can't happen because they broke God's covenant and so God cancelled their covenant.

Of course, that whole argument disintegrates when you understand that the Abrahamic Covenant [was an] unconditional covenant...(Genesis 15)

Now it's not as if God doesn't discipline Israel but when He chastises Israel and disciplines Israel that's not the same thing as saying God has cancelled Israel's program. And that's where the confusion is. The Mosaic

Covenant, which was given about six centuries after the Abrahamic Covenant is the instrument that God uses to discipline Israel, the terms rather. But those terms, although they can be very severe, never cancel Israel's unconditional foundational covenant.

2. The second argument that they use is Israel's promises are *already* fulfilled.

A lot of evangelical Christians [believe]...the land promises have already been fulfilled and they point to passages in Joshua and the Solomonic reign where supposedly the land promises were fulfilled...

Israel today has a very small sliver of everything God's promised. So, the promises remain unfulfilled despite the fact that people try to say don't worry about those promises, they've already been fulfilled.

3. And if those two arguments don't work they'll throw a third argument at you and they'll say Israel's promises are now being fulfilled in a spiritual sense through the church.

So, what they'll try to argue is Israel's terrestrial or earthly promises have now been transferred to the Church, and they call the church the '*new Israel*.'

So how do people dismiss Israel from their thinking? There's always these three arguments:

1) *Israel broke her word to God, so God broke His Word to Israel.* That can't be true because the Abrahamic Covenant was unconditional.

2) *Israel's promises have already been fulfilled.* That can't be true when you study the dimensions of those promises.

3) *And then number three, Israel's program is being fulfilled now in a spiritual sense through the church.* That can't be true because I have to be inconsistent in my method of interpretation.

So, all of these things that we've been talking about have been building to this point. Israel's program is unconditional, it's unfulfilled, it's literal, it's future, there is no coherent explanation that people can come up with to dismiss God's work with Israel.

And yet God is at work today, isn't He. God is at work today building His church, He's been doing this for two thousand years. Clearly God is at work, that's why I had you open to Romans 11:25, which says, "...that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;"

So, if God is clearly at work today what do you call it? Do you call it the new Israel? Do you call it a continuation of God's program with Israel? No, you can't call it that because the work of God through the church today is very different than what he has done in the past through Israel. And it's very different than what He will do in the future through Israel...

So, the big issue is if God is at work today through the church and it's not Israel's program, what do you call the church exactly. And this is where Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer came up with the term "*intercalation*."

And what exactly is an intercalation? That the present work of God (through the Church) is an interruption, an interval, a hiatus...

(The dictionary defines intercalation as the pausing of something to insert something brand new after which the previous 'story' or 'event' is resumed or restarted)

And that is what the church is; the church is not Israel. It's obvious it's not Israel for the reasons we've stated. It is clearly a work of God. And Israel's program isn't being fulfilled today, and it hasn't been cancelled so what do you call the present work of God? A lot of people just say 'well, it's the new Israel', 'we're the new Israel.' Or 'we're the kingdom.' NO, the church is an intercalation, an interruption in God's program for Israel, which has never been cancelled...[and will resume after the Rapture of the Church]"

Romans 11:25–26 (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...**

When Paul says that **all Israel will be saved**—he means **all believing Israel**.

When Jesus returns at His Second Coming, those believing Jews who have hidden out and escaped the persecution of the Antichrist and his followers will be physically saved and allowed to enter the Millennial Kingdom:

Matthew 24:9–13 (NKJV)

⁹ "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Yes, saved from the physical persecution of the Antichrist by the Lord Jesus Christ!—

Romans 11:26 (NKJV)

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;***

Those unbelieving Jews who will be alive at Jesus' Second Coming will be destroyed by Jesus:

Zechariah 13:8–9 (NKJV)

⁸ And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the Lord, "*That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it: ⁹ I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The Lord is my God.'*"

It could be, from what God says through Zechariah, that every unbelieving Jew will be killed during the Tribulation Period and the only Jews still alive at Jesus' Second Coming will be believers in Him.

This would explain what Paul meant in Romans 11:26: "**And so all Israel will be saved...**" (Comment)

Notice in Romans 11:26 that Paul quotes from Isaiah 59:20 which says *Messiah* (the Deliverer) will come "**to Zion**" not "*to Bethlehem*" which means that Jesus' Second Coming is in view not His First Coming.

Romans 11:27–28 (NKJV)

²⁷ **For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."** ²⁸ **Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.**

One author put it well—

“This is, of course, a continuation of the quotation from Isaiah 59; but the emphasis is on the covenant of God with Israel. God chose Israel in His grace and not because of any merit in her (Deuteronomy 7:6–11; 9:1–6). If the nation was not chosen because of its goodness, can it be rejected because of its sin? “Election” means grace, not merit. The Jewish people are “enemies” to the believing Gentiles because of their hostile attitude toward the Gospel. But to God, the Jewish people are “beloved for the fathers’ sakes.” God will not break His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

Romans 11:29 (NKJV)

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

Verse 29 is an extremely important and blessed statement (promise)!

In this verse Paul tells us that once God makes an unconditional promise to a person or to a people—those gifts and promises can never and will never be revoked!

This forms the basis for Paul’s argument that the Jewish people (Israel) are still beloved of God and the promises He gave to them are still valid.

One commentator—

*“The reason they are still beloved is that God’s **gifts and calling** are never rescinded. God does not take back His gifts. Once He has made an unconditional promise, He never goes back on it. He gave Israel the special privileges listed in 9:4, 5. He called Israel to be His earthly people (Isaiah 48:12), separate from the rest of the nations. Nothing can change His purposes.”*

Isaiah 48:9–11 (NKJV)

⁹ “For My name’s sake I will defer My anger, And for My praise I will restrain it from you, So that I do not cut you off. ¹⁰ Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. ¹¹ For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it; For how should My name be profaned? And I will not give My glory to another.

The same is true for the unconditional promise of salvation God gave to His Church. (Explain)

Romans 11:30–32 (NKJV)

³⁰ For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, ³¹ even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. ³² For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

Paul is saying that, **“Because of the unbelief of the Jews, you Gentiles were saved. Now, may it be that through your salvation Israel will come to know Christ.”**

Notice, how that Paul repeatedly reminded the saved Gentiles that they had a spiritual obligation to Israel to **“provoke them to jealousy”** (Romans 10:19; 11:11, 14).

➤ *And just how would the Gentile believers provoke the Jews to jealousy?*

By honoring and obeying God so that He might bless and use them in the most glorious ways possible.

One pastor said this on the subject—

“Israel’s hardness is only “in part” (Romans 11:25), which means that individual Jews can be saved. God has included “all in unbelief”—Jews and Gentiles—so that all might have the opportunity to be saved by grace. “There is no difference.” If God can save Jews by His grace and mercy today, why can He not save them in the future?

We must remember that God chose the Jews so that the Gentiles might be saved. “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed,” was God’s promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1–3). The tragedy was that Israel became exclusive and failed to share the truth with the Gentiles. They thought that the Gentiles had to become Jews in order to be saved. But God declared both Jews and Gentiles to be lost and condemned. This meant that He could have mercy on all because of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.”

Romans 11:33–36 (NKJV)

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?” ³⁶ For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

This concluding doxology looks back over the entire Epistle and the divine wonders that have been unfolded:

- *Paul has expounded the marvelous plan of salvation by which a just God can save ungodly sinners and still be just in doing so.*
- *He has shown how Christ’s work brought more glory to God and more blessing to men than Adam lost through his sin.*
- *He has explained how grace produces holy living in a way that law could never do.*
- *He has traced the unbreakable chain of God’s purpose from foreknowledge to eventual glorification.*
- *He has set forth the doctrine of sovereign election and the companion doctrine of human responsibility.*
- *And he has traced the justice and harmony of God’s dispensational dealings with Israel and the nations.*

Now nothing could be more appropriate than to burst forth in a hymn of praise and worship—

“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!”

I’ll leave you with the words of Pastor Chuck Smith—

“We can’t really understand the judgments of God. They are unsearchable, but they are right. Satan constantly is challenging the fairness of God. He takes advantage of the fact that we have only a limited perspective. We can’t really see what the future holds. And often times as God is working in our lives, He uses pain. He uses sorrow to teach us. He uses reversals. All for the purpose of perfecting our lives and molding us into the image of Christ...

*This business of ‘because you’re a Christian, you should never suffer, you should be rich and all’—is heresy. We as Christians oftentimes, have disappointments. We experience sorrows. We do have pain. We shed tears. But God is working in these things. He is working out His eternal purposes in our lives. And so ‘**how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!**’”*

Next time we will begin one of the most practical and powerful sections in the Book of Romans!

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Want to know more? Click [here](#).

Catch this week's audio, video, study and sermon notes [HERE](#).