

Romans 11:25-27 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."

Beginning in verse 25, we are still dealing with the admonishment to the Gentile portion of the churches. Paul is going to give another reason why they should not exalt themselves over the unbelieving Jews. This is what needs to be emphasized in this lesson. God is not done with Israel, therefore we believers must not think of ourselves as being better than they. We must carry on the mental attitude of God and of Paul.

As far as that being the overall lesson in this section, few who understand dispensations would disagree. But there are many discussions as to what verse 25 indicates. This first lesson this morning will focus on what verse 25 means. Because we all pretty much agree that the primary lesson is to not have a negative attitude against Israel, I will present this verse as to what I am persuaded it means and why.

The verse begins with a revelation of a mystery. "**μυστήριον** *mustērion* (*moo-**stay**'-ree-ahn*)" is a word that is used frequently. The definition is a secret, something that before the revelation **had been** a secret. The term "mystery" is never used as information that would never be revealed, but rather it is information that God had not yet revealed (or is not widely known) in the Hebrew Scriptures. Some have opined that the biggest mystery in the New Testament is the mystery of the "*ekklesia*."

1st Corinthians 2:3-11 – Our doctrines that we believe are not man's thoughts but revelation from God. The wisdom of God had been previously revealed but has been lost to the rulers of this world. They should have known this wisdom — it is found all over the pages of the Hebrew Scriptures. The mystery here is defined in the fact that they did not know the information even though they should have. This information is not of man; man has not seen, has not heard, or has not thought of God's plan for believers. Therefore, the mystery here is something that is not man conceived. It is information too profound for human ingenuity or imagination.

The most frequently used cross-reference is in Ephesians. Unlike Romans which only uses it here and in 16:25, Paul uses it six times in the letter to the Ephesians. 1:9-10 – The mystery of the will of God is that everything will be headed up by Christ. 3:3-6 – Gentiles were made co-heirs, co-members, and co-partakers of the promise through Jesus Christ. 6:19 – The mystery of the Gospel – This is not about the church but about the offer of reconciliation to God and the opportunity to partake in the administration of

God and the eternal glory waiting those who believe in Him. This is information that is not widely known but should be.

So, mystery can refer to many things, the mystery of the church is one of them, but we cannot automatically infer that the mystery in Romans 11:25 refers to the church. The context must dictate to what the mystery is referring.

This is the exegetical mistake that some have made. They see the word mystery and their first thought is “church,” so the automatic interpretation is that the fullness of the Gentiles means “when the entire harvest of the Gentiles comes into the church.”

First, let us define what the mystery is in this verse. The mystery is “that a hardness in part has happened to Israel.” The next phrase is an addition, “until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” The indication of the mystery is that of a partial hardening and a culmination.

Hardness is “**πώρωσις** *pōrōsis* (***poh’-roh-sis***)” and means to make as a stone, deadened senses. The verb for “has happened” is “**γίνομαι** *ginomai*” which is not a state of being but indicates that “it (Israel) has become hard.” The question always surfaces —Did God harden Israel or did Israel harden itself? The answer is “yes” but is actually irrelevant. This is not presented as a discussion point in the passage, the point is the current state of Israel is that it has become hard.

Notice that I am constantly referring to Israel as a singular “it” not “they.” This is because, as an individual, a Jew can come into the church. But Israel as a nation is not currently being used for the revealing of the glory of God. This hardening, then, is not a belief/unbelief but rather is referring to the purpose of Israel. Israel is not permitted nor do they permit themselves to be used in the administration of God.

Now comes the discussion of “the fullness of the Gentiles.” Notice again that the discipline is up to this point. The word of for fullness is “**πλήρωμα** *plērōma* (***play’-roh-mah***)” and is the noun form of the verb “**πληρώω** *plēroō* (***play-rah’-oh***)” meaning that which fills, fullness, totality, completed nature, fulfillment. The fullness here is often understood as “full number,” but is that definition justified? This word is used three other times in Romans (11:12; 13:10; 15:29). None of these references indicates a “full number” or “all who would.” None of the New Testament references refers to a full number (1Cor 10:26; Eph 4:13; Col 2:9).

The verb “**πληρώω** *plēroō*” is used primarily in the Gospels as prophecy being fulfilled. In Pauline literature, it is used as a completeness of will or purpose.

Therefore, the idea that the timing of the fullness of the Gentiles is when the last Gentile believes in Jesus is reading into the passage. The context helps us understand what this is.

When the “fullness of the Gentiles comes in” then all Israel will be saved. Paul then immediately promotes the New Covenant. The New Covenant does not happen at the rapture of the church. It happens in the inauguration of the Millennial Reign. Therefore, this fullness of the Gentiles cannot be referring to the church because we would have been gone for some time; this must be referring to something during the Tribulation.

The word for Gentiles is “**ἔθνος** *ethnos* (*ethh'-nahs*)” which means ethnic, nation. A search of this word and the word fullness with all of its cognates leads to only one New Testament reference (Luke 21:10-28). Here in vs. 24, it is the verb — “until times of nations should be fulfilled.”

The context of both Romans 11:25-27 and Luke 21:10-28 concerns the end times and the return of Jesus to save Israel (or what is left). The context dictates not a fullness of nations come into the church but rather the completion of the Gentiles as part of the prophecy of God against and for Israel as a nation.

Next hour we will deal with these events to demonstrate what will happen immediately before the Second Coming of Messiah.

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Last lesson, we dealt with what the “fullness of the Gentiles indicated.” Our conclusion was that it was referring to the completion of the use of the nations against Israel and Jerusalem. Once the nations’ purpose is complete, then Jesus will come again and all Israel will be restored.

Although God is using nations as a discipline against Israel, it does not negate the sin of the nations. God waiting for sin to become full or complete is not without its precedence (Genesis 15:13-21).

Even from the beginning of Israel, a final restoration and the judgment of the nations who are against Israel has been promised (Deuteronomy 30:1-3, 7).

According to Psalm 83, the surrounding nations have/will continue to push against Israel with the purpose of wiping Israel off the map. They desire the complete and utter destruction of Israel. The writer prays that YHWH will wipe them out. Most see this psalm as an end-times prophetic psalm. The point of this lesson is that the surrounding nations are a constant pressure against Israel. There will be a day when God will defeat them so that His name will be known and glorified.

In Ezekiel 38-39, God speaks to the “Son of Man” identifying the end-times war against Israel. It speaks of Gog and Magog, Rosh, Meshech, Tubal, Persia (Iraq/Iran), Ethiopia (Modern Day Sudan), Put (Lybia), Gomer and Beth-Togarmar (Turkey?). In verses 10-16, Ezekiel prophesies that they will all come against Israel to destroy and plunder and this is to demonstrate the power of God against the nations.

In the end, Israel will be restored and the nations will be defeated (Ezekiel 39:21-29).

In Daniel 8, Gabriel provides an interpretation of the vision of 8:1-14. In Daniel 8:19-22, the interpretation provides names and occurrences: Media, Persia, Greece, and four other kingdoms. Then in Daniel 9:27, the prince who will come and make a treaty with Israel will inaugurate the abomination of desolation.

This situation happens in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week (the middle of the Tribulation). This takes us to Matthew 24:15-21 — the Great Tribulation will be a time of man against man and God’s wrath fully on display.

Then finally, we move to Revelation 8 and 9 with the trumpet judgments on account of the abomination of desolation. God destroys over one half of the world's population. Then, in the sixth trumpet, another 200 million-man army will march from the East to war with Israel.

So now we have a necessary recap:

1. Prophecy of nations being used as a discipline against Israel in Deuteronomy
2. The neighboring nations in Psalm 83 are a constant pressure against Israel
3. The nations to the north, enemy nations in Africa, and Iraq and Iran all war against Israel
4. The pseudo world-leader makes a treaty only to try to overthrow Israel by claiming he is God
5. This initiates a wrath upon Israel and world
6. Then 200 million march on Israel from the East

Now we come to the final battle as the rest of the nations, the Beast, the False Prophet, and the Dragon meet in Armageddon to war against Israel. Revelation 19:11-21 – But now Jesus comes to the rescue to deliver Israel from the hand of all its enemies. The fullness of the nations is complete.

Now we have peace. In Romans 11:26-27, all Israel will be restored. This is a national salvation and the New Covenant will be established. We see a quote of Isaiah 59:15-21 and a clear reference to the destruction of the enemies and the New Covenant established with Israel. The New Covenant was cut at the cross, is inaugurated but it has not yet been fully established.

It is important to remember that the New Covenant is not a promise of the removal of sins in general. We have as a side benefit the forgiveness of sins individually (not nationally). The sins that are forgiven in the New Covenant are not individual sins but that of the Nation of Israel.

What sins? The sin of rejection of Messiah (initially and perpetually) and the sin of idolatry when they fall into worship of the Prince (the Beast, The Dragon, The False Prophet) claiming that this is their messiah.

The believing remnant, those who do not believe in the un-holy trinity, flee after the abomination of desolation and they survive (the last of Israel) and then call upon Jesus to save them from assured destruction and to full restoration. Jesus will forgive the national sins and all of Israel will be saved.

As another reminder, let us review the eight provisions of the New Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-34

1. Unconditional — involving God and a unified Israel
 - a. House of Judah
 - b. House of Israel
2. This is distinct from the Old Covenant
 - a. Not an elaboration
 - b. Not a repair, but a repeal/replace
3. Regeneration of Israel (Isaiah 59:21)
 - a. This refers to a spiritually saved Israel
 - b. Includes a national salvation as well
4. No need to evangelize their offspring or fellow Jews (Isaiah 61:8-9)
 - a. During the Millennial Reign, no Jew will be unsaved.
 - b. The rebellion at the end of the thousand years will not involve Israel
 - c. The New Covenant will take away their sins
5. Forgiveness of sin
 - a. The Old Covenant was unable to take away sin
 - b. This is a full and complete forgiveness of the current rebellion and setting aside
6. My Law on their hearts
 - a. No need to teach each other
 - b. God will be personally involved with each person of Israel
7. Full blessings of the Earth (Jeremiah 32:38-42; Isaiah 61:8-9; Ezekiel 34:25-27)
 - a. Not based upon obedience
 - b. Unconditional
8. The temple will be rebuilt (Ezekiel 37:24-28)