#### **Romans 11:26**

"all Israel will be saved"

subject of much theological debate and interpretation. key perspectives to consider, Scripture references

#### 1. National Israel

One interpretation is that "all Israel" refers to the collective nation of Israel, meaning that there will be a future time when the majority of ethnic Jews will come to faith in Christ.

## Scriptural Support:

- Romans 11:25-26: "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved."
- Zechariah 12:10: "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son."

## 2. Spiritual Israel

Another interpretation is that "all Israel" refers to the spiritual Israel, which includes both Jews and Gentiles who have faith in Jesus Christ. This view sees "Israel" as the people of God, irrespective of ethnic background.

# Scriptural Support:

- Romans 2:28-29: "A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code."
- Galatians 3:28-29: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

#### 3. The Remnant View

A third interpretation is that "all Israel" refers to the remnant of Israel that has been chosen by grace. This remnant includes those Jews who have come to faith in Christ throughout history.

#### **Romans 11:26**

"all Israel will be saved"

## Scriptural Support:

- Romans 11:5: "So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace."
- Romans 9:27: "Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: 'Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved."

#### 4. Combination View

Some scholars propose a combination of the above views, suggesting that "all Israel" includes both a future mass conversion of ethnic Jews and the inclusion of Gentiles who believe in Christ. This view sees a future fulfillment where a significant number of Jews will turn to Christ, completing the picture of God's people.

## Scriptural Support:

- Romans 11:11-12: "Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring!"
- Ephesians 2:14-16: "For he himself is our peace, who has made the
  two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of
  hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and
  regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity
  out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both
  of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their
  hostility."

#### Conclusion

The phrase "all Israel will be saved" can be understood in various ways, each with its own scriptural backing. Whether it refers to a future national turning of ethnic Israel to Christ, the inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles as spiritual Israel, or the remnant of believing Jews, the **overarching theme is God's faithfulness** and the fulfillment of His redemptive plan. Ultimately, this passage highlights the mystery and depth of God's wisdom and mercy (Romans 11:33-36).

Complicated Issues

## 1. The Concept of the Remnant

- **Issue**: Paul speaks of a "remnant chosen by grace" (Romans 11:5). This raises questions about the nature of God's election and the fate of the rest of Israel.
- Explanation: The idea of a remnant suggests that not all of Israel is rejected, but only a portion is chosen by grace. This highlights God's sovereignty and mercy, emphasizing that salvation is not based on works but on God's gracious choice (Romans 11:6).

## 2. Israel's Hardening and Gentile Inclusion

- **Issue**: Paul discusses a partial hardening of Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in (Romans 11:25). This raises questions about the relationship between Israel and the Gentiles in God's plan.
- **Explanation**: The hardening of Israel is temporary and serves a purpose in God's redemptive plan. It allows for the inclusion of the Gentiles, which in turn is meant to provoke Israel to jealousy and ultimately lead to their salvation (Romans 11:11-12, 25-26).

## 3. "All Israel Will Be Saved"

- Issue: Paul states that "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26). This
  phrase is subject to various interpretations and raises questions about its
  meaning.
- **Explanation**: Some interpret "all Israel" to mean the collective nation of Israel, while others see it as referring to the remnant of believers within Israel. Another view is that it includes both Jews and Gentiles who are part of God's people through faith in Christ. The context suggests a future turning of Israel to faith in Christ (Romans 11:26-27).

# 4. The Olive Tree Metaphor

- **Issue**: The metaphor of the olive tree, with natural branches (Israel) and wild branches (Gentiles) being grafted in, raises questions about the continuity and discontinuity between Israel and the Church (Romans 11:17-24).
- **Explanation**: The olive tree represents the people of God. Natural branches (unbelieving Israel) were broken off due to unbelief, and wild branches (believing Gentiles) were grafted in. This metaphor illustrates

#### Complicated Issues

the unity of God's people while maintaining the distinct roles of Jews and Gentiles in God's plan.

## 5. God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility

- **Issue**: Romans 11 emphasizes God's sovereignty in election and hardening, which raises questions about human responsibility and free will (Romans 11:7-10, 25-32).
- **Explanation**: Paul balances God's sovereign choice with human responsibility. While God is sovereign in His election and hardening, individuals are still responsible for their response to God's grace. This tension is a mystery that Paul acknowledges but does not fully resolve (Romans 11:33-36).

# 6. The Role of the Law and Grace

- **Issue**: The chapter contrasts the law and grace, particularly in the context of Israel's pursuit of righteousness (Romans 11:6-10).
- **Explanation**: Paul emphasizes that the remnant is chosen by grace, not by works of the law. This underscores the New Covenant reality that righteousness comes through faith in Christ, not through adherence to the law (Romans 11:6, Galatians 2:16).

#### 7. The Future of Israel

- **Issue**: The chapter raises questions about the future of Israel and its role in God's redemptive plan (Romans 11:11-32).
- **Explanation**: Paul envisions a future where Israel will turn to Christ and be saved. This future restoration is part of God's mysterious and sovereign plan, which includes both Jews and Gentiles (Romans 11:25-27).

## Conclusion

Romans 11 is a profound and theologically rich chapter that addresses God's sovereignty, the interplay between Israel and the Gentiles, and the nature of salvation by grace. These complicated issues require careful study and a humble acknowledgment of the mystery of God's ways (Romans 11:33-36).

**Discussion Questions** 

1. **God's Faithfulness**: How does Paul affirm that God has not rejected His people, Israel, in verse 1? What evidence does he provide?

## • Personal Evidence

Romans 11:1 (NASB): "I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."

# Paul's Own Identity:

- Paul's Heritage: Paul identifies himself as an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, and from the tribe of Benjamin. By highlighting his own Jewish heritage, Paul serves as a living example that God has not rejected His people. If God had completely rejected Israel, Paul, as an Israelite, would not be an apostle and a recipient of God's grace.
- Personal Testimony: Paul's own conversion and calling as an apostle to the Gentiles demonstrate that God is still working through Israelites. His life and ministry are evidence that God has not abandoned His people.

# Scriptural Evidence

Romans 11:2-4 (NASB): "God has not rejected His people whom He fore-knew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? 'Lord, they have killed Your prophets, they have torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life.' But what is the divine response to him? 'I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.'"

## • The Example of Elijah:

- Elijah's Plea: Paul references the story of Elijah from 1 Kings 19:10-18. Elijah felt isolated and believed he was the only faithful person left in Israel, thinking that the nation had completely turned away from God.
- God's Response: God reassured Elijah that He had preserved a remnant of seven thousand men who had not bowed to Baal. This remnant was chosen by God's grace and served as evidence that God had not rejected His people entirely.

**Discussion Questions** 

## • The Concept of the Remnant:

Romans 11:5 (NASB): "In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice."

 Present-Day Remnant: Paul draws a parallel between Elijah's time and his own, asserting that just as there was a remnant in Elijah's day, there is also a remnant in Paul's time. This remnant is chosen by grace, not by works, and serves as evidence that God has not rejected His people.

### Conclusion

Paul affirms that God has not rejected His people, Israel, by pointing to his own identity as an Israelite and by referencing the scriptural example of Elijah and the remnant. These pieces of evidence demonstrate that God's faithfulness to Israel continues, and His promises remain intact.

- 2. The Remnant: What does the concept of a "remnant chosen by grace" mean? How does this idea appear in the story of Elijah (1 Kings 19:10-18)?
  - Grace, Not Works:
    - **Grace:** The remnant is chosen by God's unmerited favor, emphasizing that their selection is not based on their adherence to the law or their own righteousness.
    - **Not by Works:** Paul makes it clear that if the remnant were chosen based on works, it would nullify the concept of grace. Grace, by definition, is a gift that cannot be earned (Ephesians 2:8-9).
  - God's Sovereign Choice:
    - **Divine Election:** The remnant is a result of God's sovereign election. This underscores God's faithfulness to His promises and His ongoing plan for Israel, even when the majority of the nation is in unbelief.
  - Grace in the Story of Elijah- 1 Kings 19:10-18
    - The story of Elijah in 1 Kings 19:10-18 beautifully illustrates the concept of grace over works.
      - Elijah, feeling overwhelmed and defeated, retreats to Mount Horeb. He believes he is the only faithful prophet left and is ready to give up. However, God meets Elijah not with

- condemnation or demands for more effort, but with grace and gentle encouragement.
- First, God provides for Elijah's physical needs by sending an angel to give him food and water (1 Kings 19:5-8). This act of grace shows that God cares for Elijah's well-being, not just his prophetic duties.
- Then, God reveals Himself to Elijah not in the powerful wind, earthquake, or fire, but in a gentle whisper (1 Kings 19:11-12). This signifies that God's presence and support are not contingent on dramatic displays or Elijah's works, but on God's grace and intimate relationship with him.
- Finally, God reassures Elijah that he is not alone. He informs him that there are still 7,000 in Israel who have not bowed to Baal (1 Kings 19:18). This revelation is a grace-filled reminder that God's plans and support extend beyond Elijah's efforts and perceptions.
- 3. **Grace vs. Works**: Why is it significant that the remnant is chosen by grace and not by works (Romans 11:6)? How does this align with the overall message of the New Covenant (Ephesians 2:8-9)?
  - The fundamental nature of God's relationship with humanity under the new covenant.
    - God's Sovereignty and Initiative:
      - 1. Salvation is entirely initiated by God and maintained by God.
      - 2. It is not something that can be earned by human effort.
    - The Nature of Grace:
      - 1. Grace, by definition, is unmerited favor. If the remnant were chosen based on works,
      - 2. it would no longer be grace. Romans 11:6
    - Freedom from Legalism:
      - 1. Paul is liberating believers from the burden of legalism. The law, including the Ten Commandments, was never intended to

**Discussion Questions** 

be a means of achieving righteousness but to point people to their need for a Savior (Galatians 3:24).

2. Under the new covenant, believers are led by the Spirit and not under the law (Galatians 5:18).

## • Assurance of Salvation:

- If salvation were based on works, it would be conditional, uncertain and unstable, as human efforts are inherently flawed.
- 2. Because it is based on God's grace, believers can have full assurance of their salvation.
- 3. **Hebrews 10:14** affirms that by one sacrifice, Jesus has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

## • Unity in Christ:

- 1. The concept of grace unifies all believers, regardless of their background. Whether Jew or Gentile, all are saved by the same grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16).
- 2. This unity is a central theme in Paul's letters, emphasizing that there is no distinction in Christ (Galatians 3:28).
- **Alignment:** here's how the concept of the remnant being chosen by grace and not by works aligns with Ephesians 2:8-9.
  - 1. Salvation as a Gift
  - 2. Elimination of Boasting
  - 3. Freedom from the Law
  - 4. Unity in Christ
  - 5. Assurance and Security

- 1. Purpose of Israel's Stumbling: According to verse 11, what is the purpose of Israel's transgression? How does this benefit the Gentiles?
  - Israel's transgression has a redemptive purpose: it benefits the Gentiles by bringing them into the fold of God's salvation plan and serves as a catalyst for Israel to reconsider and potentially embrace the Gospel. This underscores the inclusive nature of God's grace and His overarching plan to unite all people in Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16).
- 2. **Riches for the World:** What does Paul mean when he says Israel's failure brought riches to the world (Romans 11:12)? How might Israel's fullness bring even greater blessings?
  - Paul is explaining that Israel's failure, or transgression, in rejecting the Messiah has resulted in "riches" for the world, particularly for the Gentiles. Here, "riches" refers to the spiritual blessings and opportunities that have come to the Gentiles as a result of Israel's rejection of Christ. Because Israel as a nation did not accept Jesus, the message of salvation was extended to the Gentiles, allowing them to become part of God's family (Acts 13:46; Romans 9:30).
  - Israel's failure to accept the Messiah has resulted in such significant blessings for the Gentiles, then Israel's eventual acceptance and "full inclusion" will bring even greater blessings.
    - 1. **Greater Unity in the Body of Christ**: The inclusion of Israel would mean a more complete and unified body of believers, composed of both Jews and Gentiles. This unity would reflect the fullness of God's redemptive plan and demonstrate His power to reconcile all people to Himself (Ephesians 2:14-16).
    - 2. **Enhanced Witness to the World**: The reconciliation of Israel with God through Christ would serve as a powerful testimony to the world of God's faithfulness and the truth of the Gospel. It would highlight the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel and underscore the inclusivity of His grace (Romans 15:8-9).
    - 3. **Increased Spiritual Riches**: The spiritual riches that have come to the Gentiles through Israel's transgression include the knowledge of God, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of eternal life

- (Ephesians 1:3-14). The full inclusion of Israel would amplify these blessings, as more people come to faith and experience the transformative power of the Gospel.
- 4. **Fulfillment of Prophecy**: The full inclusion of Israel would fulfill numerous Old Testament prophecies about the restoration of Israel and the coming of the Messiah's kingdom (Ezekiel 36:24-28; Zechariah 12:10). This fulfillment would further validate the Scriptures and strengthen the faith of believers.
- 3. **The Olive Tree Metaphor:** How does the metaphor of the olive tree help us understand the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in God's plan (Romans 11:17-24)?
  - Paul uses the metaphor of an olive tree to illustrate the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in God's redemptive plan. This metaphor helps us understand several key aspects of how both groups are integrated into God's family:
    - 1. **The Olive Tree Represents God's People:** The olive tree symbolizes the people of God. The natural branches represent Israel, the original chosen people of God. The root of the tree signifies the patriarchs and the promises made to them by God (Romans 11:16-17).
    - 2. **Grafting in the Gentiles:** Paul explains that some of the natural branches (unbelieving Israelites) were broken off due to their unbelief. In their place, wild olive shoots (Gentiles) were grafted in. This grafting signifies the inclusion of Gentiles into God's covenant people through faith in Christ (Romans 11:17-19).
    - 3. **Unity and Equality in Christ:** The metaphor emphasizes that both Jews and Gentiles share the same root and are nourished by the same promises and blessings. This unity in Christ breaks down any barriers of division and highlights the equality of all believers in God's family (Ephesians 2:14-16).
    - 4. **Warning Against Arrogance**: Paul cautions the Gentiles not to be arrogant or boastful about their inclusion. They should remember that they do not support the root, but the root supports them. This

- serves as a reminder of God's grace and the importance of humility (Romans 11:18-20).
- 5. **Possibility of Restoration:** Paul also points out that the natural branches (unbelieving Israelites) can be grafted back into the olive tree if they do not persist in unbelief. This underscores God's mercy and the ongoing opportunity for Israel to be restored through faith in Christ (Romans 11:23-24).
- 6. **God's Kindness and Severity:** The metaphor illustrates both the kindness and severity of God. Severity is shown in the breaking off of the natural branches due to unbelief, while kindness is demonstrated in the grafting in of the Gentiles. This dual aspect of God's character serves as a call to faith and perseverance (Romans 11:22).
- 4. Warning Against Arrogance: Why does Paul warn the Gentiles against arrogance (Romans 11:20-21)? How can we apply this warning in our own lives?
  - Paul's warning serves several important purposes:
    - 1. **Reminder of Grace**: Paul wants the Gentiles to remember that their inclusion in God's family is solely by grace through faith, not by their own merit. This humility is essential because it keeps them grounded in the truth that salvation is a gift from God, not something they earned (Ephesians 2:8-9).
    - 2. **Avoiding Spiritual Pride**: Arrogance can lead to spiritual pride, where one might think they are superior to others, including the Jews who were broken off. This pride is dangerous because it shifts the focus from God's grace to human effort, which is contrary to the Gospel (Romans 3:27).
    - 3. **Encouragement to Persevere in Faith**: By warning against arrogance, Paul encourages the Gentiles to continue in faith and reliance on God's grace. This perseverance is crucial for maintaining a healthy relationship with God and avoiding the pitfalls of self-reliance (Colossians 2:6-7).

**Discussion Questions** 

4. **Unity in the Body of Christ**: Arrogance can create divisions within the body of Christ. By fostering humility, Paul aims to promote unity among believers, both Jews and Gentiles, as they recognize their equal standing before God (Ephesians 2:14-16).

## Applying This Warning in Our Own Lives

- 1. **Cultivate Humility:** Regularly remind yourself that your salvation is a result of God's grace, not your own efforts. This helps to keep pride in check and fosters a spirit of gratitude (James 4:6).
- 2. **Value All Believers:** Recognize that all believers, regardless of their background, are equally valuable in God's eyes. This perspective helps to build unity and prevents feelings of superiority (Galatians 3:28).
- 3. **Depend on God's Grace:** Continually rely on God's grace for your spiritual growth and daily living. This dependence keeps you grounded in faith and prevents the arrogance that comes from self-reliance (2 Corinthians 12:9).
- 4. **Encourage Others:** Use your understanding of grace to encourage and uplift others, rather than looking down on them. This builds a supportive and loving community (1 Thessalonians 5:11).
- 5. **Self-Examination:** Regularly examine your attitudes and actions to ensure they align with the humility and grace that characterize a follower of Christ. This self-awareness helps to root out any arrogance that may creep in (2 Corinthians 13:5).

**Discussion Questions** 

# Section 3: The Mystery of Israel's Salvation (Romans 11:25-32)

- 1. The Mystery Revealed: What is the "mystery" that Paul reveals in verse 25? How does this mystery affect our understanding of God's plan for Israel and the Gentiles?
  - The "mystery" Paul refers to here is a previously hidden aspect of God's redemptive plan that has now been revealed. Specifically, this mystery involves the partial hardening of Israel and the inclusion of the Gentiles in God's salvation plan.
    - 1. **Partial Hardening of Israel:** Paul explains that Israel has experienced a partial hardening. This means that not all Israelites have rejected the Messiah; there is still a remnant chosen by grace (Romans 11:5). This hardening is not total or permanent but serves a specific purpose in God's plan.
    - 2. **Inclusion of the Gentiles:** During this period of Israel's partial hardening, the Gospel is being preached to the Gentiles, and many are coming to faith in Christ. This inclusion of the Gentiles was part of God's plan from the beginning but was not fully understood until it was revealed through the apostles (Ephesians 3:6).
    - 3. **Future Restoration of Israel:** The mystery also includes the future restoration of Israel. Paul indicates that this partial hardening will continue "until the full number of the Gentiles has come in." After this, there will be a significant turning of Israel to faith in Christ (Romans 11:26-27).
    - 4. **Unity in Christ:** The ultimate goal of this mystery is to bring both Jews and Gentiles together into one unified body in Christ. This unity reflects the fullness of God's redemptive plan and His desire to reconcile all people to Himself (Ephesians 2:14-16).
- The mystery Paul reveals in Romans 11:25 significantly impacts our understanding of God's plan for both Israel and the Gentiles.
  - 1. **God's Sovereignty and Faithfulness**: The mystery underscores God's sovereignty in orchestrating His redemptive plan. Despite Israel's partial hardening, God remains faithful to His promises. He has not

- abandoned Israel but has a plan for their future restoration (Romans 11:26-27). This demonstrates that God's promises are irrevocable and that He is faithful to His covenant (Romans 11:29).
- 2. **Inclusivity of Salvation**: The inclusion of the Gentiles highlights the universal scope of God's salvation plan. Salvation is not limited to a specific ethnic group but is available to all who believe in Jesus Christ. This inclusivity fulfills the promise made to Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his offspring (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:8).
- 3. **Unity in Christ**: The mystery reveals God's intention to create one unified body of believers, composed of both Jews and Gentiles. This unity is a central theme in Paul's writings and reflects the breaking down of barriers that once separated these groups (Ephesians 2:14-16). In Christ, there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile; all are one in Him (Galatians 3:28).
- 4. **Humility and Gratitude**: Understanding this mystery fosters humility and gratitude among Gentile believers. Paul warns against arrogance, reminding the Gentiles that they are grafted into the olive tree by grace through faith, not by their own merit (Romans 11:18-20). This perspective encourages a humble and grateful attitude toward God's grace.
- 5. **Hope for Israel's Future**: The mystery provides hope for Israel's future restoration. Paul indicates that Israel's partial hardening is temporary and that a significant number of Israelites will come to faith in Christ in the future (Romans 11:25-26). This hope encourages believers to pray for and share the Gospel with the Jewish people, anticipating their eventual inclusion.
- 6. **God's Redemptive Plan**: The mystery reveals the depth and complexity of God's redemptive plan. It shows that God's ways are higher than our ways and that His plan unfolds according to His perfect wisdom and timing (Isaiah 55:8-9). This understanding deepens our trust in God's sovereignty and His ultimate purpose to reconcile all things to Himself through Christ (Colossians 1:20).

- 2. All Israel Will Be Saved: What do you think Paul means by "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26-27)? How does this fit with the idea of a remnant and the inclusion of the Gentiles?
  - The phrase "all Israel will be saved" has been the subject of much theological discussion. Here are some key points to consider in understanding what Paul means:
    - 1. **Corporate vs. Individual Salvation**: Paul is likely speaking in a corporate sense rather than suggesting that every individual Israelite will be saved. "All Israel" can be understood as the collective nation, particularly a significant number of Israelites who will come to faith in Christ in the future. This aligns with the idea of a remnant chosen by grace (Romans 11:5).
    - 2. **Future Turning to Christ**: Paul envisions a future time when a substantial number of Israelites will recognize Jesus as the Messiah and turn to Him in faith. This is supported by the context of Romans 11, where Paul speaks of Israel's partial hardening until the full number of Gentiles has come in (Romans 11:25). After this, there will be a significant movement among the Jewish people toward faith in Christ.
    - 3. **Fulfillment of Prophecy**: Paul supports his statement by quoting Old Testament prophecies that speak of a deliverer coming from Zion and turning godlessness away from Jacob (Isaiah 59:20-21; Jeremiah 31:33-34). These prophecies point to the Messiah's role in bringing about Israel's spiritual renewal and forgiveness of sins.
    - 4. **God's Covenant Faithfulness**: The salvation of "all Israel" underscores God's faithfulness to His covenant promises. Despite Israel's current unbelief, God remains committed to His promises and will bring about their fulfillment in His timing (Romans 11:29).
    - 5. **Inclusive of Believing Jews**: "All Israel" includes the remnant of Jewish believers who have already come to faith in Christ, as well as those who will come to faith in the future. This collective understanding emphasizes that God's plan for Israel is not abandoned but will be fully realized.

**Discussion Questions** 

- 3. God's Mercy: How does Paul describe God's mercy towards both Jews and Gentiles in verses 30-32? What does this teach us about God's character?
  - In Romans 11:30-32, Paul describes God's mercy towards both Jews and Gentiles in a way that highlights the inclusivity and depth of God's grace. Here are the verses:

## 1. Mercy Through Disobedience:

- Paul explains that the Gentiles, who were once disobedient to God, have now received mercy because of Israel's disobedience.
- Israel's rejection of the Messiah opened the door for the Gospel to be preached to the Gentiles, allowing them to receive God's mercy (Romans 11:11).

# 2. Reciprocal Mercy:

- Paul also points out that Israel, who is now in a state of disobedience, will also receive mercy.
- The mercy shown to the Gentiles serves as a catalyst for Israel to eventually turn back to God and receive His mercy.
- This reciprocal dynamic underscores the interconnectedness of God's plan for both groups (Romans 11:31).

## 3. Universal Disobedience and Mercy:

- Paul concludes by stating that God has "bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all."
- This means that both Jews and Gentiles are equally in need of God's mercy because all have been disobedient.
- God's plan allows for everyone to experience His mercy, highlighting the universal availability of His grace (Romans 3:23-24).

**Discussion Questions** 

**Section 4: Doxology (Romans 11:33-36)-** The word "doxology" comes from the Greek words "doxa," meaning "glory," and "logia," meaning "saying" or "word." Therefore, a doxology is a short hymn or expression of praise to God, often focusing on His glory, majesty, and eternal nature.

## **Discussion Points:**

- God's Wisdom and Knowledge: Reflect on the depth of God's wisdom and knowledge (Romans 11:33).
- Unsearchable Judgments: God's ways are beyond human understanding (Romans 11:33-34).
- All Things from God: Everything is from Him, through Him, and to Him (Romans 11:36).
- 1. God's Wisdom and Knowledge: How does Paul describe the depth of God's wisdom and knowledge in verse 33? Why is it important to recognize the limits of our understanding?
  - Description of God's Wisdom and Knowledge
    - 1. **Depth of Riches:** Paul uses the metaphor of "depth" to convey the vastness and inexhaustibility of God's wisdom and knowledge. This suggests that God's understanding is profound and beyond human comprehension.
    - 2. **Unsearchable Judgments:** The term "unsearchable" indicates that God's decisions and judgments are beyond human ability to fully investigate or understand. His ways are not subject to human scrutiny or analysis (Isaiah 55:8-9).
    - 3. **Paths Beyond Tracing Out**: This phrase emphasizes that God's ways and methods are mysterious and cannot be fully mapped or understood by human reasoning. His plans and purposes are intricate and far-reaching, often beyond our ability to grasp (Job 11:7-9).
  - Importance of Recognizing the Limits of Our Understanding
    - Humility: Acknowledging the limits of our understanding fosters humility. It reminds us that we are finite beings with limited knowledge, whereas God is infinite and all-knowing. This humility is essential for a

- proper relationship with God, as it keeps us from becoming prideful or self-reliant (Proverbs 3:5-6).
- 2. **Trust in God:** Recognizing our limitations encourages us to trust in God's wisdom and sovereignty. When we encounter situations that we cannot understand or explain, we can rest in the assurance that God knows what He is doing and that His plans are ultimately for our good (Romans 8:28).
- 3. **Worship and Awe:** Understanding the depth of God's wisdom and knowledge leads to a greater sense of awe and worship. It helps us appreciate the majesty and greatness of God, prompting us to respond with reverence and adoration (Psalm 145:3).
- 4. **Dependence on God's Revelation:** Since our understanding is limited, we must depend on God's revelation through Scripture and the Holy Spirit. God's Word provides the guidance and wisdom we need for life and godliness, even if we do not fully comprehend all of His ways (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- 5. **Patience and Perseverance**: Recognizing that we do not have all the answers helps us to be patient and persevere through trials and uncertainties. We can trust that God is working behind the scenes in ways that we may not see or understand, and that His timing is perfect (James 1:2-4).
- 2. Unsearchable Judgments: What does it mean that God's judgments are unsearchable and His ways are beyond tracing out (Romans 11:33-34)? How should this influence our trust in Him?
  - Unsearchable Judgments and Beyond Tracing Out Ways
    - 1. **Unsearchable Judgments**: The term "unsearchable" implies that God's decisions, decrees, and judgments are beyond human ability to fully investigate or understand. His judgments are perfect and just, but they are often beyond our finite comprehension (Isaiah 55:8-9). This means that God's ways of dealing with humanity, His plans for salvation, and His purposes in history are not always clear to us.

- 2. **Beyond Tracing Out**: The phrase "beyond tracing out" suggests that God's methods and paths are intricate and cannot be fully mapped or understood by human reasoning. His ways are mysterious and often hidden from our view, making it impossible for us to predict or fully grasp His actions (Job 11:7-9).
- 3. **Divine Wisdom and Knowledge**: Paul emphasizes the depth of God's wisdom and knowledge, indicating that God's understanding is infinite and far exceeds human wisdom. This depth means that God's plans and purposes are executed with perfect wisdom, even when they are beyond our understanding (Psalm 147:5).
- 3. All Things from God: How does the doxology in verses 36 summarize Paul's message in Romans 11? What does it mean that everything is from Him, through Him, and to Him?
  - Summary of Paul's Message in Romans 11
    - 1. **God's Sovereignty:** Throughout Romans 11, Paul emphasizes God's sovereign control over the unfolding of His redemptive plan. He discusses the partial hardening of Israel, the inclusion of the Gentiles, and the future restoration of Israel. The doxology encapsulates this by acknowledging that everything originates from God, is sustained by God, and ultimately exists for God's purposes.
    - 2. **God's Wisdom and Knowledge:** Paul marvels at the depth of God's wisdom and knowledge, which are beyond human comprehension (Romans 11:33-34). The doxology reinforces this by attributing all things to God's wise and knowledgeable governance.
    - 3. **God's Mercy:** Paul highlights the mercy extended to both Jews and Gentiles. The doxology underscores that this mercy is part of God's overarching plan, which is from Him, through Him, and to Him.
  - Meaning of "From Him, Through Him, and To Him"
    - 1. **From Him:** This phrase indicates that God is the source of all things. Everything in creation, including the plan of salvation, originates from God. He is the Creator and the initiator of all that exists (Colossians 1:16).

**Discussion Questions** 

- 2. **Through Him:** This signifies that God is the means by which all things are sustained and carried out. God's power and providence uphold the universe and ensure the fulfillment of His purposes. Everything happens through His sustaining power and active involvement (Hebrews 1:3).
- 3. **To Him:** This phrase means that everything ultimately exists for God's glory and purposes. The end goal of all creation and history is to bring glory to God. All things are directed towards Him and find their ultimate purpose in Him (Ephesians 1:11-12).

# Implications for Believers

- 1. **Worship and Adoration:** Recognizing that all things are from, through, and to God should lead believers to a posture of worship and adoration. It reminds us that God is the ultimate source, sustainer, and goal of everything, prompting us to give Him the glory He deserves (Revelation 4:11).
- 2. **Trust and Dependence:** Understanding God's sovereignty and providence encourages us to trust and depend on Him. Knowing that He is in control and that everything is sustained by His power gives us confidence to rely on Him in all circumstances (Proverbs 3:5-6).
- 3. **Purpose and Meaning:** Realizing that everything exists for God's glory gives our lives purpose and meaning. It reminds us that our ultimate goal is to glorify God in all that we do, aligning our lives with His purposes (1 Corinthians 10:31).
- 4. **Humility and Gratitude:** Acknowledging that all things are from, through, and to God fosters humility and gratitude. It reminds us that we are not the center of the universe; God is. This perspective helps us to live with a sense of thankfulness for His grace and mercy (James 1:17).

# Romans 11:17-24 "Breaking off of the Branches" Is Salvation Secure

Yes, some people might interpret the breaking off of the original branches in Romans 11:17-24 as evidence that salvation is not secure and is dependent upon continued obedience. However, a closer examination of the context and the broader teaching of the New Testament reveals a different understanding.

- 1. **Context of Unbelief**: The branches that were broken off represent Israelites who did not believe in Jesus as the Messiah. Their breaking off is due to unbelief, not a failure to maintain obedience after initially believing (Romans 11:20). This distinction is crucial because it shows that the issue is one of faith, not works.
- 2. **Security in Christ**: The New Testament consistently teaches that those who are in Christ are secure in their salvation. Jesus Himself said that no one could snatch His sheep out of His hand (John 10:28-29). Paul also assures us that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:38-39).
- 3. **Grace, Not Works**: Salvation is by grace through faith, not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9). The metaphor of the olive tree emphasizes that both Jews and Gentiles are grafted into God's people by faith, not by their own efforts. The root supports the branches, not the other way around (Romans 11:18).
- 4. **Warning Against Arrogance**: Paul's warning to the Gentiles is not about losing salvation but about avoiding arrogance and remaining in faith. He cautions them to continue in God's kindness, which means to persist in faith, not to rely on their own works (Romans 11:22).
- 5. **Possibility of Restoration**: Paul also highlights God's mercy and the possibility of restoration. The natural branches (unbelieving Israelites) can be grafted back in if they do not persist in unbelief (Romans 11:23). This underscores that the issue is faith, not a continuous performance of good works.

In summary, the breaking off of the original branches in Romans 11:17-24 is about unbelief, not a loss of salvation due to disobedience. The broader teaching of the New Testament affirms the security of believers in Christ, emphasizing that salvation is by grace through faith and not dependent on our works. This understanding helps us rest in the assurance of our salvation and encourages us to continue in faith, trusting in God's grace.

**Discussion Questions** 

## **Section 1: The Remnant of Israel (Romans 11:1-10)**

- 1. I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.
- 2. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?
- 3. "Lord, they have killed Your prophets, they have torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life."
- 4. But what is the divine response to him? "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."
- 5. In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.
- 6. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.
- 7. What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;
- 8. just as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not and ears to hear not, Down to this very day."
- 9. And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, And a stumbling block and a retribution to them.
- 10. "Let their eyes be darkened to see not, And bend their backs forever."

## **Discussion Questions:**

- 1. **God's Faithfulness**: How does Paul affirm that God has not rejected His people, Israel, in verse 1? What evidence does he provide?
- 2. **The Remnant**: What does the concept of a "remnant chosen by grace" mean? How does this idea appear in the story of Elijah (1 Kings 19:10-18)?
- 3. **Grace vs. Works**: Why is it significant that the remnant is chosen by grace and not by works (Romans 11:6)? How does this align with the overall message of the New Covenant (Ephesians 2:8-9)?

**Section 2: The Gentiles Grafted In (Romans 11:11-24)** 

Key Verses: Romans 11:11-15

#### **Discussion Questions**

- 1. **Purpose of Israel's Stumbling**: According to verse 11, what is the purpose of Israel's transgression? How does this benefit the Gentiles?
- 2. **Riches for the World**: What does Paul mean when he says Israel's failure brought riches to the world (Romans 11:12)? How might Israel's fullness bring even greater blessings?
- 3. **The Olive Tree Metaphor**: How does the metaphor of the olive tree help us understand the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in God's plan (Romans 11:17-24)?
- 4. **Warning Against Arrogance**: Why does Paul warn the Gentiles against arrogance (Romans 11:20-21)? How can we apply this warning in our own lives?

Section 3: The Mystery of Israel's Salvation (Romans 11:25-32)

Key Verses: Romans 11:25-27

**Discussion Questions:** 

- 1. The Mystery Revealed: What is the "mystery" that Paul reveals in verse 25? How does this mystery affect our understanding of God's plan for Israel and the Gentiles?
- 2. **All Israel Will Be Saved**: What do you think Paul means by "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26-27)? How does this fit with the idea of a remnant and the inclusion of the Gentiles?
- 3. **God's Mercy**: How does Paul describe God's mercy towards both Jews and Gentiles in verses 30-32? What does this teach us about God's character?

Section 4: Doxology (Romans 11:33-36)

Key Verses: Romans 11:33-36

- 1. God's Wisdom and Knowledge: How does Paul describe the depth of God's wisdom and knowledge in verse 33? Why is it important to recognize the limits of our understanding?
- 2. **Unsearchable Judgments**: What does it mean that God's judgments are unsearchable and His ways are beyond tracing out (Romans 11:33-34)? How should this influence our trust in Him?

#### **Discussion Questions**

3. **All Things from God**: How does the doxology in verses 36 summarize Paul's message in Romans 11? What does it mean that everything is from Him, through Him, and to Him?

#### Conclusion

## **Application Questions:**

- 1. **Humility and Gratitude**: How can we cultivate humility and gratitude in light of God's grace and mercy as described in Romans 11?
- 2. **Unity in the Body of Christ**: What practical steps can we take to embrace unity between different groups within the body of Christ, reflecting the inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles?
- 3. **Trust in God's Sovereignty**: How can we grow in our trust in God's perfect plans, even when we don't fully understand them?

These questions should help facilitate a deep and meaningful discussion of Romans 11, encouraging participants to engage with the text and apply its truths to their lives.

#### NASB

- 1. I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.
- 2. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?
- 3. "Lord, they have killed Your prophets, they have torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life."
- 4. But what is the divine response to him? "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."
- 5. In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.
- 6. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.
- 7. What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;
- 8. just as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not and ears to hear not, Down to this very day."
- 9. And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, And a stumbling block and a retribution to them.
- 10. "Let their eyes be darkened to see not, And bend their backs forever."
- 11. I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.
- 12. Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!
- 13. But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,
- 14. if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.
- 15. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?
- 16. If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too.
- 17. But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree,

#### **NASB**

- 18. do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.
- 19. You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."
- 20. Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;
- 21. for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.
- 22. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.
- 23. And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.
- 24. For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?
- 25. For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;
- 26. and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob."
- 27. "This is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."
- 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;
- 29. for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.
- 30. For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,
- 31. so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.
- 32. For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.
- 33. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!
- 34. For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor?
- 35. Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again?
- 36. For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.