

The Mystery Revealed

Rev. Lex DeLong / General Adult

Romans Road to Recovery / Romans 11:25–32

Because God is faithful to His ancient covenant promises to Israel, you can trust He will be equally faithful to His covenant promises to you.

Notes

05/17 Rom. 11:25-32, Title: "The Mystery Revealed," Subtitle: All Israel Shall Be Saved, Main Idea: Our security rests on the fact that God does not change His mind about those He calls. Because He is faithful to His ancient promises to Israel, you can trust He will be equally faithful to you, Scripture: Ezek. 36:24-28

Ever worry that God might change His mind about your salvation? The ultimate proof of His faithfulness to YOU is found in His ancient, unchanging promises to Israel.

Join us this Sunday for "The Mystery Revealed" (Romans 11:25-32).

 Sunday, May 17  10:30 AM  In-person or Livestream here: [\[Link\]](#)
#EternalSecurity #Romans11 #SundayService

Sermon Title: The Mystery Revealed

Subtitle: All Israel Shall Be Saved

Main Text: Romans 11:25-32

Supporting Scripture: Ezekiel 36:24-28

Main Idea: Because God is faithful to His ancient covenant promises to Israel, we can trust He will be equally faithful to His covenant promises to us.

Introduction

Have you ever had a moment where you wondered, "Have I messed up too much? Has God finally lost patience with me? Will He change His mind about my salvation?"

- It's human nature to project our own fickle behavior onto God.
- When people break promises to us, we fear God might do the same.
- Worst yet, when we break promises to God, we fear we might undermine our relationship with Him or lose it all together.

To answer and calm those reasonable fears, Paul knows that we must look at the whole of Scripture. We must seek to understand how God has demonstrated continuity in His dealings with His people throughout the generations of biblical history all the way up to today.

- Paul addresses these exact fears in Romans 11 by pointing us to the nation of Israel itself. We look at Israel and see a nation that rebelled for centuries. We might think, 'Surely, God is done with them.'
- But it is crucial for us today to look closely at what God says in Romans 11. We will see in this passage of Paul's writing that God's calling and His gifts to Israel are irrevocable. He will keep His ancient, unconditional promises to the physical nation of Israel.
- Last week we saw that earlier in the chapter Paul was **speaking about** ethnic Israel, but keep in mind that He was **directly addressing** the church in Rome.

Here is the connection for us: The God who refuses to break His unconditional covenant with a rebellious nation is the exact same God who refuses to break His unconditional promise of grace to us.

- Please take note what I say next: God's character does not change. Our eternal security is not based on our perfect performance; it is based on His unchanging nature.
- Because He is eternally faithful to His unconditional covenant with Israel, we can know with absolute certainty that He will be eternally faithful to His unconditional covenant with us.

The Main Idea: Today, we are looking at a "mystery revealed." God has a distinct, future plan for ethnic, national Israel. But we can learn from Paul's teaching.

Because God's gifts and unconditional calling are irrevocable for them, His unconditional grace is irrevocable for us.

Transition: But if we are going to anchor our eternal security to God's faithfulness to Israel, we have to address the obvious question staring the Roman church in the face: If God is so faithful, why does it look like Israel is currently cut off and hardened against the gospel?

Paul knows that if we misunderstand Israel's current stumbling, it will distort our view of God's character and fatally inflate our own pride.

So, before he proves God's future faithfulness, he has to pull back the curtain and show us exactly what God is doing behind the scenes right now.

I. God's Hardening of Israel is Both Partial and Temporary ("partial" & "until," Romans 11:25)

Romans 11:25 "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;"

In this verse...

A. God is Revealing a Mystery that both Cures Our Spiritual Arrogance and underscores God's immutability

- In the New Testament, a "mystery" isn't a puzzle to solve, but a divine truth previously hidden or partially seen that God is now laying out in the open. Paul reveals this specifically so the Gentile church doesn't get conceited.
- **The Historical Reality:** Why were they conceited? We mentioned last week that just a few years before Paul wrote this, the Emperor Claudius had kicked all Jewish people out of Rome. For five years, the Roman church was 100% Gentile. They got used to being in charge. They started believing God was entirely done with the Jews and that the Gentiles were His new favorites.
- When the Jewish believers finally returned, some Gentiles looked down on them. Paul is writing this mystery to crush that exact spiritual arrogance. God has not replaced Israel; He has a distinct, future plan for them.
- To be clear, the mystery is not that Israel will be saved—the Old Testament prophets preached that constantly. The mystery, which was hidden from the Old Testament prophets, is this current 'Church Age': a temporary period during which Israel experiences a hardening for a time so that God can pour out His grace on the Gentile world.
- That explains to us that God has more in store for the Gentiles than just their own perception of themselves or Israel.

B. The Pause in Israel's Program Opened the Door for the Gentiles

- Israel's hardening is not total
- In this vs., Paul uses the word, "partial." God is still saving a Jewish remnant, Paul states he himself is an example of it.
- The word for "hardening" here in this verse is *pōrōsis*. In ancient Greek medical terminology, this described a joint calcifying into solid stone. Paul is giving a spiritual medical diagnosis—a severe, petrified callousness. This perfectly sets up the literal surgical cure God will perform later when He removes the "heart of stone" spoken of in Ezekiel 36!

- Israel's hardening is not total. Israel's hardening is also not permanent, it has an expiration date. Note Paul's use of the word, "until," in this verse.
- God has temporarily paused His prophetic timepiece for Israel so that He might gather in a specific, foreordained number of Gentiles during this present Age until that verse's specific described moment when that number is reached in the future.
- V. 25 clearly indicates that when that time comes, God's pause with His prophetic timepiece for Israel will stop and His attention will again return to them.

C. The "Fullness of the Gentiles" in this verse is a Specifically mentioned, Foreordained Number

- The word "fullness" (pleroma) points to completion. God is not just haphazardly saving people; He has a specific, complete number of Gentiles He intends to save.
- Once that final, foreordained Gentile is saved, the "fullness" has come in. The hardening of Israel's heart changes.
- This Church Age concludes, the pause ends, and God's prophetic clock for national Israel will start ticking again.

Transition: When the fulness of the Gentiles has come in...

II. God Will Literally Fulfill His Unconditional Covenant with Israel (Romans 11:26-27 & Ezekiel 36:24-28)

Romans 11:26-27 "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.'"

Without question...

A. "All Israel" Points to a Future, Ethnic Salvation

- When Paul says "Israel," he means the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He isn't spiritualizing the text to redefine what he is saying to mean the church. He plainly says, "all Israel will be saved," and in saying such, means Israel as a nation.

Greek Insight: Notice the phrase "*and so all Israel will be saved.*" The Greek word for "and so" is *houtōs*, meaning "in this manner" or "consequently." This grammatically cements God's timeline: He doesn't just save Israel eventually; He saves them

consequently the exact moment the Gentile quota is met.

- This points to the very end of the seven-year Tribulation described in the book of Revelation. The scriptures teach that the surviving Jewish remnant will finally look upon the Messiah they pierced, mourn in genuine repentance, and be saved as a national entity—which is the very event that ushers in the Second Coming of Christ.
- We must be precise here: 'All Israel' does not mean every Jewish person who has ever lived throughout history. It refers to the entirety of the surviving national entity—the remnant that survived, that is alive at the end of the Tribulation, who collectively look upon Christ and repent.

(Research Notes: Daniel 9:24; Hosea 5:15 & Matt 23:39; Zechariah 12:10)

Research Notes: Within authoritative, academic dispensational theology, there is a near-unanimous consensus that the national salvation of "all Israel" in Romans 11:26 occurs at the very end of the seven-year Tribulation, synchronized with the Second Advent of Christ.

Here is how the leading scholars and peer-reviewed resources (such as J. Dwight Pentecost, John Walvoord, Arnold Fruchtenbaum, and Thomas Constable) arrive at this timing using the literal hermeneutic:

1. The Purpose of Daniel's 70th Week

Dispensational scholars point to Daniel 9:24. The 70-week decree is specifically determined for "your people and your holy city" (Israel and Jerusalem). The stated purpose of this final seven-year period (the Tribulation) is "to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness." Therefore, the grammatical-historical reading demands that the Tribulation itself is the crucible God uses to bring national Israel to repentance. The climax of that 70th week is their salvation.

2. The Prerequisite for the Second Coming (Hosea 5 & Matthew 23)

Arnold Fruchtenbaum (author of *The Footsteps of the Messiah*, widely considered a gold-standard text on Messianic dispensationalism) argues extensively from Hosea 5:15 and Matthew 23:39.

- In Hosea 5:15, God says He will return to His place until they admit their guilt and seek His face; "in their affliction [the Tribulation] they will earnestly seek me."
- In Matthew 23:39, Jesus tells the Jewish leaders, "You will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Fruchtenbaum and others note that the national repentance of the surviving Jewish remnant at the end of the Tribulation is actually the required trigger for Christ's physical return.

3. The Zechariah 12-13 Sequence

John Walvoord (*Israel in Prophecy*) and J. Dwight Pentecost (*Things to Come*) heavily emphasize Zechariah 12:10 and 13:8-9. During the final campaign of Armageddon (the end of the Tribulation), two-thirds of the nation will perish, but the surviving one-third (the remnant) will have the Spirit of grace poured out on them. They will "look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him." This mourning is the national repentance that results in the Romans 11:26 salvation.

Aside from all the textual proof in Scripture itself, consider with me the Historical Proof: King Frederick the Great of Prussia was a skeptic. He once demanded of his chaplain, *"Give me a single, unanswerable proof of the existence of God, and do it in one*

word." The chaplain bowed and replied, "*The Jew, Your Majesty.*"

> Think about it: For nearly 2,000 years, the Jewish people were scattered across the globe, without a homeland, enduring relentless persecution. Historically and sociologically, any other people group would have assimilated and vanished into the dustbin of history and an ethnic melting pot of lineage. Yet they survived as a distinct people and were regathered into a nation in 1948.

It seems the God of Ezekiel 36 and Romans 11 is preserving them right before our eyes for a literal, future, national salvation.

B. Ezekiel 36 Proves the Promise Rests entirely on God's "I Will"

- (Refer to Ezekiel 36:24-28 that we read earlier in the service)
- Notice who is mentioned as doing the work seven times in these verses in Ezekiel: I will gather you. I will sprinkle clean water on you. I will give you a new heart. I will put my Spirit within you, I Gave to your forefathers.
- God put His own holy reputation on the line to establish this New Covenant. It is presented as a unilateral and unconditional covenant.

Since the covenant is unilateral and unconditional, then...

C. Israel's Disobedience Did Not Nor Could not Cancel the Covenant

- Look at the sheer magnitude of what God promised in Ezekiel. Now fast forward to Paul's day—Israel had already rejected the Messiah. Did their disobedience void God's promise in the understanding of the Apostle Paul?
- If their sin canceled God's grace, that would put the power to override God's grace into human hands. That would make man sovereign and God subject to Him. If that were the case, then God is a liar, the Bible is not true, and we have no greater purpose in life than that of ourselves. But Paul answers this idea and gives us the ultimate anchor, the ultimate hope for our souls.

III. God's Promises Depend on His Character, Not on Human Behavior (Romans 11:28-29)

Romans 11:28-29 "From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."

A. They Can Be Enemies of the Gospel and Still Loved by God

- As a national entity right now, Israel as a nation stands in opposition to the gospel. Yet, God still calls them "beloved" because He made an unconditional promise to their forefathers.
- God chooses to love them based on His choosing, not their actions.

B. The Anchor for Our Security is that God Does Not Change His Eternal Plan

- Verse 29 is the bedrock of this entire passage. God does not repent of His choices. Once God has chosen to give His gifts, He does not ask for them back. God does not un-call those He has called.

C. God Will Never Disown His Chosen People

- In the original text, the word for "irrevocable" (ametamelētos) literally means "without regret."
- God never looks at a rebellious Israel—or a stumbling Christian—and wishes He had chosen someone else. (say this twice)
- In our world, we issue recalls on defective products and we fire failing employees. But God knew every sin you would ever commit before He ever decided to call you, and He called you anyway. No future failure on your part will ever disappoint Him or surprise Him into taking His grace back.
- Remember what Paul already told this same church just three chapters earlier in Romans 8:30: "*Those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*" If He called you, He has declared you just and glorified you.
- God does not un-call those He has called, because His call was never based on your performance; it was based entirely on His Divine choosing.

The Roman Law of Adoption: Paul is writing to believers living in the capital of the Roman Empire. Under Roman law (*patria potestas*), a father had absolute power over his biological children. If a biological son disappointed him, the father could legally disown him, sell him into slavery, or even have him executed.

But Roman law had a fascinating loophole: If a father adopted a child, that legal action was absolute. Under Roman law, an adopted child could never be disowned. The choice was irrevocable.

When God inspired Paul to write that His calling is "without regret," the Roman Christians understood it meant their Heavenly Father, through adoption, had legally bound Himself to them forever. He will never disown His adopted children.

- **Transition:** Because God's character is utterly unchanging, He is able to weave even our deepest human rebellion into a masterpiece of grace. In this pericope of Paul's writing, that brings us to the grand finale of Paul's argument.

IV. God Orchestrates History to Put His Sovereign Mercy on Display (Romans 11:30-32)

Romans 11:30-32 "For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all."

A. God Uses Human Disobedience as the backdrop for His Divine Mercy and Grace

- This describes a beautiful, sovereign symmetry at work. I refer to it as a Divine/Human cooperative, when humanity's efforts and God's divine sovereignty cooperate together in harmony to accomplish God's good and perfect will. The Gentiles were disobedient but received mercy through Israel's stumbling.
- Now, Israel is disobedient so that they too will ultimately be overwhelmed by the mercy of God.

B. Paul Presented God's Divine Checkmate Against Human Pride

- This is similar to what Paul Says in Eph. 2:8-9, "...lest any man should boast." It is by His grace that our faith cooperates with that saves us. It starts with Him, not with us, but works together with us to fulfill His will.
- Look again at the shocking language of verse 32: "*For God has bound everyone over to disobedience.*"

Greek Insight: The verb used here for "bound" or "shut up" is synekleisen. It means to enclose on all sides, or to trap without a way out. It's the exact same root word used in Luke 5:6 for fish caught in an inescapable net.

- God threw an inescapable net over the pride of both Jews and Gentiles. He didn't just passively watch both Jew and Gentile rebel; He allowed all of humanity to be locked into the exact same prison of sin.

- "Why?" you might ask. Because if there was any loophole—if any group could save themselves by their heritage, their intellect, their own choosing, or their good behavior—they would rob God of His glory.

God shut every door to human achievement so that the only door left open was His grace.

The Great Flood of Grace: The famous Bible teacher Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse explained this perfectly. He said to imagine that God's standard of righteousness is a global flood of water. One man is a terrible sinner—he is standing at the bottom of Death Valley. Another man is highly moral and religious—he climbs all the way to the peak of Mount Everest.

When the floodwaters of God's perfect, holy standard rise to 30,000 feet, what is the difference between the two men? One drowned under miles of water, and the other drowned under a few feet of water. But they are both equally drowning. That is what Paul means in verse 32. God shut us all under the waters of disobedience so that neither the guy in the valley nor the guy on the mountain can swim their way to heaven. Both require a sovereign rescue.

- **Transition:** This deliberate historical checkmate leads to the most humbling and liberating truth in the entire book of Romans.

C. The Ground is Level for all at the Foot of the Cross

- The playing field is entirely leveled. Neither Jew nor Gentile can boast in their own righteousness. Both are utterly guilty; both are completely dependent on the sovereign mercy of God to rescue them from drowning in the inescapable torrents of sin.

Transition into Application: When you truly grasp that reality—that you brought nothing to your own rescue except the sin that was drowning you—it changes everything.

Paul didn't drop this massive theological mystery on the Roman church just to give them an academic history lesson; he gave it to them to anchor their souls and to kill their pride. Theology is meant to be lived.

So, what does this mean for us on Monday morning? Let's look at three ways this level ground must reshape our daily lives.

Application

1. We Can All Rest Securely in God's Unchanging Character

- If God were done with Israel, we should be terrified that He might one day be done with us. Because God keeps His unconditional promises to a rebellious nation, we

can be 100% certain He will keep His unconditional promises to us, according to God's express will, paid for by the blood of Christ, sealed by the work of the Holy Spirit.

- Our salvation is sustained by God's irrevocable call and effective grace, not our own imperfect performance.

2. Because of the Foundation of God's Mercy and Grace, We Can Abandon Any Hint of Spiritual Arrogance

- The church has not replaced Israel. We are not now better than them or they than us.
- We cannot make the same arrogant mistake the first-century Roman church made, assuming a temporary hardening means a permanent rejection.
- Just because natural branches were temporarily broken off so we could be grafted into the olive tree, does not mean the tree belongs to us.
- We are wildly blessed guests grafted into the olive tree of God's redemptive plan. View the Jewish people with love, pray for their salvation, and recognize the immense spiritual debt we owe them.

3. As We Enjoy Belonging in the tree of God's Redemptive Plan, it Should Compel Us to Marvel at the Sovereign Wisdom of God

- Human history is not spinning out of control. Even rebellion and rejection are woven into God's sovereign tapestry to display His overarching mercy.
- When our own lives feel chaotic, remember that the God who orchestrates the rise and fall of nations throughout millennia has our days perfectly measured out in His grace.

God's grace isn't a lease you can break; it is a covenant He will forever keep.

Because God won't give up on Israel, you can know...

God will never give up on you.

Call to Action

Identify one area where you are currently wondering about God's faithfulness to you. Take time to write Romans 11:29 on a card and put it where you will see it every day this week: *"For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."*

Let that truth be the reality that can and will quiet your soul and help you find rest in God alone.