

AND SO ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED

TEXT: ROMANS 11:25-36

INTRODUCTION:

1. Romans 9—11 deal with the restoration of Israel. God wants us to understand this. “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant...” (11:25). This is a phrase often used by the apostle Paul to indicate he is about to say something vitally important (cf. Romans 1:13).
 - “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea...” (I Corinthians 10:3).
 - “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant” (I Corinthians 12:1).
 - “For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia” (II Corinthians 1:8).
 - “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep” (I Thessalonians 4:13).
2. Paul was concerned that his Gentile readers would understand these important doctrines, lest they were to become proud and conceited – “lest ye should be wise in your own conceits”(11:25).
3. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, “God’s revelation is intended to produce humility and to abolish all false conceit” (*St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*).
4. “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”
5. A “mystery” in the New Testament is not something that cannot be understood. It is something not clearly taught in the Old Testament, “some plan or purpose of God that has been known to Him from the beginning, but which He has withheld from the knowledge of men until the time came for Him to reveal it” – Clarence Larkin (*Dispensational Truth*; cf. *Scofield Study Bible*, p. 1014).

6. Colossians 1:26 defines a mystery as “which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.”
7. Romans 11:25 says this mystery is the partial (“in part”) and temporary blindness (hardening) of Israel – “until the fulness of the Gentiles come in.”
8. It is “in part,” because there has always been “a remnant according to the election of grace” (Romans 11:5).
9. *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* defines the word “blindness” as “obtuseness of mental discernment, dulled perception, stubbornness.”
10. “The fulness of the Gentiles” refers to the present church age in which most Christians are Gentiles. This will change at the second coming of Christ and the restoration of Israel (Romans 11:26).

I. THE PROGRAM OF GOD

1. In Romans chapter 11, the apostle Paul has been dealing with God’s program for both the Jew and the Gentile. The grafting in of the Gentiles into the good olive tree was God’s plan though it was “contrary to nature” (11:24).
2. Despite being contrary to nature, the Gentiles were fruitful, with souls being saved all over the world. And if the Gentiles have been fruitful, how much more so will Israel, the natural branches, be fruitful when they will “be grafted into their own olive tree?” (11:24b).
3. It is God’s plan to restore Israel. This is taught all throughout the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament.
4. Before He ascended into heaven, our Lord’s disciples asked him, saying, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6).
5. Our Lord answered them, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1:7).
6. The church age began at that time. Our Lord said, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

7. After the church age, there will be a restoration of Israel. Israel's spiritual blindness (in part) will continue "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Romans 11:25b).
8. There is a difference between "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24) and "the fulness of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:25).
9. "The times of the Gentiles" has to do with the political control of Jerusalem. The *Scofield Study Bible* says, "The 'times of the Gentiles' began with the captivity of Judah under Nebuchadnezzar (II Chronicles 36:1-21), since which time Jerusalem has been under Gentile overlordship."
10. "The fullness of the Gentiles" refers to the present age in which Gentiles predominate in the church.
11. Romans 11:12 says, "Now if the fall of them (Israel) be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?"
12. That same word "fulness" is used in Romans 11:25 – "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."
13. The present "fulness" of the Gentiles is contrasted with the future "fulness" of Israel, i.e., the restoration of Israel.
14. The term "the times of the Gentiles" refers to the political ascendancy of the Gentiles, whereas the term "fulness of the Gentiles" refers to their spiritual ascendancy.
15. The restoration of Israel will take place at the second coming of Christ. He is "the Deliverer," who "shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Israel)" (11:26).
16. "It is written" (11:26) in Isaiah 59:20 – "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD."
17. "All Israel" (Romans 11:26) refers to the Jews that are alive when Christ returns. Many Jews will die during the coming tribulation. Jeremiah 30:7 refers to it as "the time of Jacob's trouble."
18. Zechariah 13:8, 9 says only one third of the Jews will survive the tribulation. But those who survive will repent (Rom. 11:26).
19. Zechariah 13:9 says, "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God" (cf. Zech. 12:10; Ezekiel 20:34-38).

20. When Israel is restored, the ratification of the new covenant will take place (Romans 11:27).
21. Jeremiah 31:31 says, “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah” (cf. Hebrews 8:7-13).
22. “As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes...” (11:28). By their enmity shown to the Gospel, the Gentiles had been given an opportunity to receive the Gospel.
23. Regarding Israel, God’s gifts and calling are unchangeable (11:29). What God promises He will fulfil. What God purposes to do, He will not change from or “repent” of.
24. As God made promises to the fathers, he will not repent of them, and will not depart from them.
25. They shall all be fulfilled. Though they have been set aside because of their unbelief, God will restore them at the second coming of Christ.
26. God’s love for Israel has not been annulled by their disobedience.

II. THE MERCY OF GOD (11:30-32)

1. The word “mercy” is found four times in verses 30—32.
2. It has always been God’s plan to show mercy to all. Deuteronomy 4:31 says, “For the LORD thy God is a merciful God.”
3. In Romans 11:28, Paul says, “As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes...” Because they had rejected the Messiah, they had made themselves enemies of God.
4. “But as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes” (11:28b). God chose their “fathers” (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). The nation of Israel was chosen to be the special people of God.
5. There is a contrast here – “enemies” and “beloved.”
6. Gentile Christians have now obtained mercy through the unbelief of Israel.
7. The context indicates that “your mercy” in verse 31 is referring to the mercy God had shown to them. This happened so that the Jews who did not believe, may now receive mercy.
8. The words “not believed” in verses 30 and 31 means to not allow one's self to be persuaded; to refuse to believe or to refuse to obey God.

9. There is a sharp contrast here between God's great mercy and Israel's stubborn unbelief.

10. And not just Israel's unbelief. "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all" (11:32).

11. "All" here means "all without distinction" (not "all without exception") – both Jews and Gentiles are guilty and in need of God's mercy.

12. W.H. Griffith Thomas summarized this passage this way:

(1) The fall of the Jews was overruled for mercy to the Gentiles.

(2) The salvation of the Gentiles was intended to stir the Jews to the acceptance of Christ.

(3) The salvation of the Jews is to issue in still greater blessing to the human race.

(4) The glorious future that is yet to dawn on the world by the mercy of God (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*).

III. THE WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (11:33)

1. The "knowledge of God" refers to His omniscience and His foreknowledge.

2. Romans 11 ends with a beautiful doxology (11:33-36).

3. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (11:33). As the depths of the ocean are unfathomable, so are the "riches" of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

4. God's ways are unsearchable and inscrutable to man. "Past finding out!" (11:33).

5. Albert Barnes said, "Literally, which cannot be tracked or traced out. The footsteps cannot be followed. As if his path were in the sea (Psalm 77:19), and the waves closed immediately, leaving no track."

6. Psalm 77:19 says, "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known."

7. God's ways are "past finding out!" (11:33).

8. “For who hath known the mind of the Lord?” (11:34). The answer is no one. God is infinite in wisdom. Therefore, no mortal man could ever teach Him, or counsel Him.
9. Romans 11:34 is similar to Isaiah 40:13 – “Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?”
10. Romans 11:35 is similar to Job 41:11 – “Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.”
11. “Shall be recompensed” means to be repaid as a matter of debt. None of God’s mercies could ever be repaid. If they could, God would be under obligation to man, and that would be impossible.
12. “For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof” (Psalm 50:10-12).

CONCLUSION:

Romans 11:36 concludes this section (chapters 9—11) with a reminder that the restoration of Israel, and all of God’s dealings with Israel are beyond all human schemes and plans – “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.” God’s ways are “past finding out!”(11:33).