

**Romans 11:25-36**  
**July 5, 2015**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: Before we begin today's study, did anyone have an opportunity to let someone know that the "door is always open?"

Today we're finishing Chapter 11. Paul has spent most of this chapter, not only helping the Gentile readers truly appreciate that God opened the door for them to have salvation, but also helping us understand that God in His sovereignty had this plan of salvation all along. The last section of verses we'll see Paul proving that the very character and work of God are involved in the future of Israel.

**Transition:** I could be wrong, but I think today's lesson will be valuable to you because it will help strengthen your understanding of God's plan of salvation and the prophecy that supports it. Let's begin.

**BOOK (NIV 1984):**

**[Read Romans 11:25-36]**

V.25:

- I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

V.26:

- And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. [Most likely "national conversion"]

V.27:

- And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

V.28:

- As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs,

V.29:

- for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

V.30:

- Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience,

V.31:

- so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you.

V.32:

- For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

V.33:

- Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

V.34:

- Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"

V.35:

- "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"

V.36:

- For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

### **Process Observations/Questions:**

Q v.25: Paul gives a general timeline as to how much longer the Israelites will remain hardened. What do you see? [Until the full number of Gentiles has come in]

Q v.25: Are "all" Israelites existing with a hardened heart? [No, only in "part" because God has a remnant in every generation. There are Jews who declare Jesus as their Messiah]

Q v.26: Here is an important teaching that needs clarification. Paul declares that "all Israel will be saved," which probably creates tension for all of us at some level. After all, we know that anyone, both Jew or Gentile, who don't profess Christ during their life, will not be saved. So what exactly is Paul saying?! ["All Israel shall be saved" does not mean that every Jew who has ever lived will be converted, but that the Jews living when the Redeemer returns will see Him, receive Him, and be saved. X-REF Isaiah 59:20–21; Zechariah 12–13 give the details.]

Observation v.26: Notice God's Promise - there is a "fullness" for Israel (X-Ref Rom. 11:12) and for the Gentiles. [Today, God in His grace is visiting the Gentiles and taking out a people for His name (Acts 15:12–14). Individual Jews are being saved, of course; but this present age is primarily a time when God is visiting the Gentiles and building His church. We are the unwritten canon of Scripture for the book of Acts! When this present age has run its course, and the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, then God will once more deal with the nation of Israel.]

Q v.27-28: What is God's covenant? [The deliverer will come from Zion; He will turn godlessness away from Jacob...He will "take away their sins."]

Q: v.28: On what basis did God choose Israel? [LOVE - God chose Israel out of his love for His people and not because of any merit in her (X-REF Deut. 7:6–11; 9:1–6)]

Q v.29: What do we learn about God's gifts and His call? [They are *irrevocable*. "I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. 3:6). God's gifts to Israel, and God's calling of Israel, cannot be taken back or changed, or God would cease to be true to His own perfect nature.]

Q v.32: God has bound all men over to disobedience for what purpose? [So that he may have mercy on them all. X-Ref Rom 3:23]

App Q: In light of these last twelve verses, what TRUTHS have we learned about God that would give hope to someone who is resisting God? Did you see any Scripture that would lead you to believe the door is always open and the light will always be left on to give hope to someone else?

- God's call is irrevocable
- God is sovereign.
- God's wisdom, knowledge, and judgments are unsearchable
- No one knows the mind of God
- All things are from Him and through Him and to Him

**LOOK:**

God has been intentional from the beginning on His plan of salvation. He offered it to His chosen people first, but when they rebelled, God opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles, which is you and me. He has made clear in today's passage that the door of salvation is open until the "fullness of Gentiles" has come in. Once that happens, God WILL honor His covenant to the patriarchs to give the Jews who are living during the time of the Tribulation to come into the Kingdom.

Our part during this Church age is to *share the gospel* as He has commanded in His Great Commission. The Lord tarries until His plan of salvation has been fully executed. Let's be his mouthpiece, His ambassador for Christ!

**Close in Prayer**

### **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 552–556). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

### **God Himself (Rom. 11:25–36)**

Paul saved his best witness for the last. He proved that the very character and work of God were involved in the future of Israel. Men may dispute about prophecy and differ in their interpretations, but let every man realize that he is dealing with *God's people*, Israel.

**God's timing (v. 25).** What has happened to Israel is all a part of God's plan, and He knows what He is doing. The blinding (or hardening, Rom. 11:7) of Israel as a nation is neither total nor final: it is partial and temporary. How long will it last? "Until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11:25). There is a "fullness" for Israel (Rom. 11:12) and for the Gentiles. Today, God in His grace is visiting the Gentiles and taking out a people for His name (Acts 15:12–14). Individual Jews are being saved, of course; but this present age is primarily a time when God is visiting the Gentiles and building His church. When this present age has run its course, and the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, then God will once more deal with the nation of Israel.

Romans 11:25 is one of several "until verses" in the Bible, all of which are important. Read Matthew 23:32–39; Luke 21:24; and Psalm 110:1 for other references. It is reassuring that God knows what time it is and that He is never late in fulfilling His will.

**God's promise (v. 26).** The reference here is Isaiah 59:20–21; and you ought to read Isaiah 60 to complete the picture. God has promised to save His people, and He will keep His promise. There are those who interpret this as meaning salvation to individuals through the Gospel, but it is my conviction that the prophet has national conversion in mind. "All Israel shall be saved" does not mean that every Jew who has ever lived will be converted, but that the Jews living when the Redeemer returns will see Him, receive Him, and be saved. Zechariah 12–13 give the details. It seems to me that there are too many details in these Old Testament prophecies of national restoration for Israel for us to spiritualize them and apply them to the church today.

**God's covenant (vv. 27–28).** This is, of course, a continuation of the quotation from Isaiah 59; but the emphasis is on the covenant of God with Israel. God chose Israel in His grace and not because of any merit in her (Deut. 7:6–11; 9:1–6). If the nation was not chosen because of its goodness, can it be rejected because of its sin? "Election" means grace, not merit. The Jewish people are "enemies" to the believing Gentiles because of their hostile attitude toward the Gospel. But to God, the Jewish people are "beloved for the fathers' sakes." God will not break His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

**God's nature (v. 29).** "I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. 3:6). "God is not a man that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent" (Num. 23:19). God's gifts to Israel, and God's calling of Israel, cannot be taken back or changed, or God would cease to be true to His own perfect nature. The fact that Israel may not enjoy her gifts, or live up to her privileges as an elect nation, does not affect this fact one bit. God will be consistent with Himself and true to His Word no matter what men may do. "Shall their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?" (Rom. 3:3, literal translation)

**God's grace (vv. 30–32).** "Because of the unbelief of the Jews, you Gentiles were saved," said Paul. "Now, may it be that through your salvation Israel will come to know Christ." Note that Paul repeatedly reminded the saved Gentiles that they had a spiritual obligation to Israel to "provoke them to jealousy" (Rom. 10:19; 11:11, 14). Israel's hardness is only "in part" (Rom. 11:25), which means that individual Jews can be saved. God has included "all in unbelief"—

Jews and Gentiles—so that *all* might have the opportunity to be saved by grace. “There is no difference.” If God can save Jews by His grace and mercy today, why can He not save them in the future?

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

**God’s wisdom (vv. 33–36).** Having contemplated God’s great plan of salvation for Jews and Gentiles, all Paul could do was sing a hymn of praise. As someone has remarked, “Theology becomes doxology!” Only a God as wise as our God could take the fall of Israel and turn it into salvation for the world! His plans will not be aborted nor will His purposes lack fulfillment. No human being can fully know the mind of the Lord; and the more we study His ways, the more we offer Him praise. Are we to conclude that God does *not* know what He is doing, and that the nation of Israel completely ruined His plans? Of course not! God is too wise to make plans that will not be fulfilled. Israel did not allow Him to rule, so He overruled!

Paul summoned five witnesses, and they all agreed: there is a future for Israel. When Israel recovers from her “fall” and enters into her “fullness,” the world will experience the riches of God’s grace as never before. When Jesus Christ returns and sits on David’s throne to reign over His kingdom, then Israel will be “reconciled” and “received,” and it will be like a resurrection!

**Witmer, J. A. (1985). Romans. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, pp. 485–490). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

### 3. IN ISRAEL’S SALVATION (11:25–32).

11:25–27. Israel’s corporate stumbling, which is temporary, not permanent, is called a **mystery**. In Scripture a mystery is not a truth difficult to understand, but a truth previously unrevealed (and therefore unknown) which is now revealed and publicly proclaimed (cf. Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26; at Matt. 13:10–16, see the chart that lists NT mysteries). Paul wanted to make sure his Gentile readers knew about the mystery concerning Israel in God’s sovereign choice. God’s purpose was **so that you may not be conceited** (lit., “wise in yourselves”). God’s sovereign plan to put Israel aside temporarily in order to show grace to Gentiles is no basis for conceit on the part of the Gentiles; it is designed to display further the glory of God.

God purposed that some from all nations should by faith receive the righteousness provided by grace. In order to achieve this goal Israel’s relationship as God’s Chosen People was rescinded for a time and **Israel** is now experiencing **a hardening in part until the full number** (*plērōma*, “fullness”) **of the Gentiles has come in**. There is a fullness for Israel (Rom. 11:12) and a fullness for the Gentiles. God is now “taking from the Gentiles a people for Himself” (Acts 15:14).

In Romans 11:25 are two specific facts about Israel’s hardening (cf. vv. 7–8): (a) it is partial, “in part” (because throughout this time “there is a remnant chosen by grace,” v. 5), and (b) it is temporary (because it will end when God’s sovereignly chosen number of Gentiles has been saved).

“Hardening” is *pōrōsis* (“hardening, dulling”); it differs from the verb *sklērynei* (“hardens”) used of Pharaoh (9:18) and the noun *sklērotēta* (“stubbornness,” lit., “hardening,” 2:5). The first noun (*pōrōsis*) refers to dullness, the second suggests stubbornness.

After “the fullness of the Gentiles” (11:25, KJV) the partial hardening of Israel will be removed and **all Israel will be saved**, that is, “delivered” (in the OT “saved” often means “delivered”) from the terrible Tribulation by the Messiah, **the Deliverer**. To confirm this, Paul quoted from Isaiah 59:20–21 and 27:9. The statement, “All Israel will be saved” does not mean that every Jew living at Christ’s return will be regenerated. Many of them will not be saved, as seen by the fact that the judgment of Israel, to follow soon after the Lord’s return, will include the removal of Jewish rebels (Ezek. 20:34–38). Following this judgment God will then remove **godlessness** and **sins** from the nation as He establishes His New Covenant with regenerate Israel (cf. Jer. 31:33–34).

11:28–29. Here Paul summarized God’s dealings with Israel and with the Gentiles. In order for God to bring **the gospel** to Gentiles He had to deal with Israel corporately as **enemies**. But in relation to God’s choice (**election**) of Abraham and His covenant with him and **the patriarchs**, Israel is beloved. Because God chose Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (cf. 9:6–13), He loves the nation and will carry through on His promises. This is another reason Israel’s hardening must be temporary (cf. 11:15, 22–25) and she must finally be saved corporately: God chose her. And **God’s gifts and His call are irrevocable** (lit., “for not repented of are the grace-gifts and the calling of God”). He does not revoke what He has given or whom He has chosen (“call” means election and salvation; cf. 1:6; 8:30).

11:30–32. The Gentiles to whom Paul wrote **were at one time disobedient to God**, but in this Age of Grace Gentiles (**you**) **have now received mercy**. When Adam disobeyed (5:19) all were constituted sinners because all humanity sinned in Adam (5:12). (Cf. “disobedient” in Eph. 2:2; 5:6; and “disobedience” in Heb. 4:6, 11.) Israel (**they**) is **now** corporately **disobedient** to God so **that** when **God’s mercy to the Gentiles (you)** reaches its full number (Rom. 11:25), Israel will again **receive mercy** (cf. vv. 26–27). God’s ultimate purpose is to **have mercy on ... all**. To do so justly **God has bound** (*synkleisen*, “enclosed, shut in on all sides”) **all men over to disobedience**. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (3:23). “Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin” (3:9), so that “there is no difference” (3:22). When the Gentiles rejected God and disobeyed Him (1:17–21), God chose Abraham and his descendants as His special people. Now the disobedience of the Jews enables God to show mercy to the Gentiles. Then, when that purpose is achieved, He will again show mercy to Israel corporately.

#### 4. TO GOD’S GLORY AND PRAISE (11:33–36).

11:33–36. As Paul ended his discussion on the revelation of God’s righteousness in His sovereign choice, he burst forth in a doxology of praise to God. He exclaimed, **Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!** The plan of God for the salvation of all people demonstrates God’s infinite knowledge and His ability to use it wisely. God has revealed some of **His judgments and His paths** (“ways”) so that people may know them, but it is humanly impossible to exhaust them. **Beyond tracing out** translates the one word *anexichniastoi*, which means “incapable of being traced by footprints.” In Ephesians 3:8, its only other use in the New Testament, it is rendered “unsearchable” and refers to the riches of Christ.

The apostle then quoted Isaiah 40:13, which shows that **God** is the sole Designer of His wise plan. No one knows His **mind** or gives Him advice. This is followed by a free quotation from Job 41:11, which testifies to God’s sole responsibility for His acts. **God** is indeed the Sovereign

of all things, the One to whom all creatures are accountable and whom all should glorify. He is under no obligation to **repay** anyone, for no one **has ever given** Him anything. Paul concluded, **For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.** God is the first Cause, the effective Cause, and the final Cause of everything. His deep ways are beyond man's discovering (Rom. 11:33); beyond man's knowing (v. 34a), beyond man's counseling (v. 34b), and beyond man's giving (v. 35). "All things" come from Him and by means of Him (John 1:3; Col. 1:16a; Rev. 4:11) and are for Him and His glory (Col. 1:16b). Therefore, **To Him be the glory forever! Amen** (cf. Rom. 15:6; 16:27; 1 Peter 4:11; Rev. 5:12–13). God is the only proper One to magnify (1 Cor. 1:31). The all-sovereign God deserves the praise of all His creatures.

**Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (pp. 1699 – 1701). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.**

**11:25–26** Paul showed here that hardening is not a permanent sentence against Israel, even though it resulted from their rejection of the message about Christ. First, he reaffirmed that only a part of Israel was hardened. That is, many Jews of Paul's day did acknowledge Jesus as Lord and were saved. Nevertheless, at the end of the age, the Jews will turn en masse to Christ (or some believe that Jews throughout the church age will respond to the gospel). When Paul stated that *all* Israel will be saved, he did not intend "all" without exception but "all" as in a very large number (see 1 Sm 25:1; 1 Kg 12:1; 2 Ch 12:1; Is 45:25; Dn 9:11; Mk 1:5; Lk 3:21; Acts 13:24). Paul used similar connotations for "all" and "many" in Rm 5:18–19 (cp. a similar usage of "all" in 11:32).