

ROMANS 11:26 - 36 "All Israel Will Be Saved. What Does This Mean?"

Romans 11:26-36 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.

Up to this point God has made it clear through this letter to the Romans that the name Israel is associated with a holy nation, a holy root. Unfortunately, very early on in the life of the nation of Israel holiness became a by-word as it related to this people called out by God to represent Him in the world.

And so, as we approach our text this morning it is important to keep the context in mind if we are to arrive at a proper biblical understanding of what it means for all of Israel to be saved, and so it will be instructive to do a quick recap of Paul's position on both Israel and the Gentile world that he has been addressing through much of this letter.

In fact, Paul sets out his mission very early on in the first chapter.

Romans 1:14-17 ¹⁴ *I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians*, both to the wise and to the foolish. ¹⁵ So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. ¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the

Greek. ¹⁷ For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

This is in keeping with the ministry Christ gave to Paul which was primarily to be the apostle to the Gentiles and of which Paul reminds the Romans at the very end of this letter.

Romans 11:13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as *I am an apostle of Gentiles*, I magnify my ministry,

Romans 15:15-16 ¹⁵ But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of *the grace that was given me from God*, ¹⁶ *to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles*, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that *my* offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

And so, it must be clear that Paul's emphasis is on encouraging the Gentiles that they share in the blessings of Abraham which in turn were to be blessings to Israel who was birthed through the seed of Abraham.

But, though Paul was called by Christ to minister unto the Gentiles, it was always understood that his ministry would still include the Jews.

^{NAU} **Acts 9:15** But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;

The sons of Israel were those Jews who would listen to the gospel as Paul preached to them. And so, it should not surprise us to see Paul addressing both groups in this letter. And this is actually Paul's point in zeroing in on what it meant to share in the blessings of salvation that were now to be given worldwide to both Jew and Gentile.

But Paul always makes the connection to Abraham as the one who received the covenant of promise and how that promise was to be fulfilled through Israel, and then how that covenant promise would be fulfilled in Christ.

And this is why Paul always comes back to what it means to be a child of God by addressing both Jew and Gentile in light of the covenant blessings given by God. And in doing this Paul reminds

the Jews that their physical heritage, going back to Abraham, is not the basis of their being identified as Jews and therefore as being identified as Israel.

Romans 9:6-8 ⁶ But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel; ⁷ nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." ⁸ That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

If they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel then who is Israel? Paul answers it clearly, "the children of the promise are regarded as descendants."

Well, who are the children of the promise?

Romans 4:9-17 ⁹ Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." ¹⁰ How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; ¹¹ and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that *he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,* ¹² *and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.* ¹³ For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; ¹⁵ for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation. ¹⁶ For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, *even* God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

To be a descendant of Abraham, according to the covenant given to him by God, is to be one who embraces the faith of Abraham, be

they of the circumcision, that is a Jew, or uncircumcision, that is a Gentile.

Therefore, to be the true Israel is to be of the faith of Abraham that includes both Jew and Gentile being united under one covenant and therefore being sharers in one faith.

Ephesians 2:11-16 ¹¹ Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision " by the so-called "Circumcision," *which is* performed in the flesh by human hands-- ¹² *remember* that you were at that time separate from Christ, ***excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*** ¹³ ***But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*** ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into* one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, ¹⁵ by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is* the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

The Gentiles were once excluded from the commonwealth of Israel and the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in the world. But then Paul says, "but now in Christ Jesus you have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

Brought near to what? The commonwealth of Israel that included the covenants of promise where they now have hope in God through Christ.

In other words, though not all of the physical descendants of Israel are Israel, every Gentile and Jew who is tied to the promises given to Israel, through faith in Christ, is Israel.

If we do not understand this most basic premise of what it means to be of the household of faith then we do not understand the meaning of the church which is the true Israel as Paul addresses in his letter to the Galatians when he distinguishes between those who boast in the Law, the nation of Israel, and those who boast in the cross, both Jew and Gentiles who embrace Christ.

Galatians 6:12-16 ¹² Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³ For those

who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. ¹⁴ But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, **but a new creation**. ¹⁶ And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon **the Israel of God**.

The new creation is the Israel of God. And so, when Paul, who has been making the case for what it means to be a Jew, according to promise throughout this entire letter, as he includes both Jew and Gentile as equals under Christ, finally comes to this point in his letter and says, “all Israel will be saved,” he is necessarily speaking to that Israel which is holy unto the Lord, that called out people who embrace Christ alone for their salvation.

With this understanding it most certainly effects one’s eschatology because if “all Israel” is speaking about the nation of Israel being saved, then by default the Church and Israel are two separate entities and a great deal of theological gymnastics has to be accomplished to reconcile two different plans for future “Israel” and the future “Church.”

But God has made it clear that there is only one people of God who is in Christ, made up of both Jew and Gentile, called the “Israel of God.”

^{NAU} **1 Corinthians 12:13** For by **one Spirit** we were all baptized into **one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and **we were all** made to drink of **one Spirit**.

^{NAU} **Galatians 3:28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for **you are all one in Christ Jesus**.

Colossians 3:10-13 ¹⁰ and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him-- ¹¹ *a renewal* in which there is **no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all**. ¹² So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

It could not be more clear. The true Israel that Paul speaks of is the Israel that Paul identifies as being made up of both Jew and Gentile, and all who are chosen to be part of God's family will indeed be brought home on the final day when Christ raises His people from the dead to be with Him forevermore on the new earth. And thus, all Israel will be saved.

John 6:39 ³⁹ "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

Paul has just argued that many Jews will be grafted back into the root or the vine, and he reiterates it at the end of verse 26 and verse 27.

Romans 11:26-27 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."

The last part of verse 26 and verse 27 is in connection to the promise that many from Israel will be grafted back into the root. But the context is always only those who are supported by the root or the vine who have placed their faith in their Messiah who will take away their sins.

But when we go back to the place where Paul quotes these verses we find that the prophet Isaiah is addressing Israel who has been chosen to be the recipient of this message.

Isaiah 59:20-21 ²⁰ "A Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," declares the LORD. ²¹ "As for Me, this is My covenant with them," says the LORD: "My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring," says the LORD, "from now and forever."

Again, this does not mean that Isaiah has in mind that the nation of Israel will be the recipient of this covenant where the sins of the nation are forgiven but that those individuals who turn from transgression in Jacob who embrace the Redeemer shall partake of this covenant.

We know that the nation did not and has not and will not in the future fulfill this prophecy because Jesus addressed the Jews during His earthly ministry who denied Him and were plainly told by our Lord that though they claimed Abraham as their father, their father was actually the devil. (John 8:44).

Those same Jews were also told by our Lord that they were not part of the Redeemer's flock.

John 10:26-31 ²⁶ "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. ²⁷ "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ "My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. ³⁰ "I and the Father are one." ³¹ The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.

And this, of course, is why Paul said earlier in the letter to the Romans that being identified with Israel does not make one a true Jew.

Romans 9:6-8 ⁶ But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel; ⁷ nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." ⁸ That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

But again, this does not mean we neglect the Jews with the truth of God's promise that was entrusted with them. And this is why Paul continues with that thought in our text.

Romans 11:28-31 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.

How is it that Paul can call the Jews, and by implication, Israel, enemies of the cross and yet beloved by God for the sake of the fathers?

Because he is making a distinction between the heart of Israel and the heart of God who chooses. The heart of Israel has forsaken the gospel and the Redeemer that Isaiah spoke of and thus disqualifies them from representing God as the holy branches of the Holy Root. That's why they were broken off so that the Gentiles could be grafted in.

But what makes them beloved for the sake of the fathers? The covenant that God made with Israel exclusively, to the exclusion of the Gentiles. It was God's choice to bestow on Israel these covenant blessings that Paul brought up earlier as his heart went out to his brethren.

Romans 9:3-5 ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, ⁴ who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises, ⁵ whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

In other words, Israel was blessed with the heart of God found in His revelation to them that the Messiah would come through them to bring life to the world who embraced the Messiah. It was Israel alone who was given all these things. But it is on the heels of this truth that Paul then says what we quoted a few moments ago when he redefines who Israel is.

Romans 9:6 ⁶ But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel;

And so, despite God's choice and the promises given to Israel through the fathers, (that is Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), the truth remains that the Israel that Paul teaches on who will carry on the name of the Messiah will not be exclusively the physical descendants of Abraham, that is the nation of Israel, but only those who embrace the Messiah, both Jew and Gentile who will be considered the sheep of God's pasture.

That doesn't change the fact that God has chosen to act and to move through the nation of Israel as the truth of the Messiah was given to them and it doesn't mean that those truths and the covenant promised to Israel isn't fulfilled by those Jews who place their faith in Christ.

In that sense Paul is simply stating the obvious in the next couple of verses as he shows how mercy is given to all peoples, not just Israel.

Romans 11:29-32 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.

The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable. Does that mean that God cannot remove the nation of Israel from representing Him in this world?

Of course not. Our Lord has always told Israel that if they would not follow Him He would remove them from His presence.

Numbers 32:11-14 ¹¹ 'None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they did not follow Me fully, ¹² except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have followed the LORD fully.' ¹³ "So the LORD'S anger burned against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until the entire generation of those who had done evil in the sight of the LORD was destroyed. ¹⁴ "Now behold, you have risen up in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to add still more to the burning anger of the LORD against Israel.

Only those who follow the Lord will enter into the Promised Land. And the same is true from a New Testament perspective, be they Jew or Gentile. This is precisely why Abraham, who was originally given the covenants and the promises by God, could look beyond the physical land and to a city with foundations whose architect and builder is God.

There is no special privilege to enter into the presence of the Lord simply because of your physical heritage. But this does not detract from the fact that God made a choice to call out a people identified as Israel to carry the message of Abraham.

But they as a nation would be cut off when they refused to faithfully take that message and follow that message of hope. And this was why the Lord gave them a writ of divorce.

Jeremiah 3:8-10 ⁸ "And I saw that for all the adulteries of *faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce*, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and was a harlot also. ⁹ "Because of the lightness of her harlotry, she polluted the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. ¹⁰ "Yet in spite of all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to Me with all her heart, but rather in deception," declares the LORD.

For all intents and purposes the called out people identified as Israel, and the Gentile world, both have found themselves as being disobedient.

Romans 11:32 ³² For God has shut up all in disobedience...

But this is the amazing grace of God that both Jew and Gentile, who deserve the wrath of God because of their disobedience, are now shown mercy by the God who desires to make one new people called the Israel of God.

Romans 11:31-33 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!

Who would have ever thought that through the disobedience of Israel the entire world would be shown mercy as God calls out a people from every corner of the earth and brings them to Himself as He shows mercy and grace to both Jew and Gentile?

What an amazing and merciful God who gives life to those who deserve death and condemnation. "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!"

Romans 11:34-36 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.

Paul asks a question that he borrows from Isaiah. And the context in Isaiah addresses God's sovereign choice to perform His will without having to consult with man.

Because the same question that many have as it relates to God rejecting the nation of Israel in favor of an Israel made up of both Jew and Gentiles who embrace Christ, is the same question with the same answer that Paul raises earlier regarding the choices God sovereignly makes as to whom He chooses to show mercy.

Romans 9:15-21 ¹⁵ For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." ¹⁶ So then it *does not depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." ¹⁸ So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. ¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" ²⁰ On the contrary, *who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?* ²¹ Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

As much as man tries to dictate to God about how He must accomplish His will and what His plans for mankind must entail, God is still on His throne and the context in Isaiah surrounding Paul's quote sums it up quite well.

Isaiah 40:22-31 ²² It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. ²³ He *it is* who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. ²⁴ Scarcely have they been planted, Scarcely have they been sown, Scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, But He merely blows on them, and they wither, And the storm carries them away like stubble. ²⁵ *"To whom then will you liken Me That I would be his equal?" says the Holy One.* ²⁶ Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these *stars*, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of *His* power, Not one *of them* is missing. ²⁷ Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God"? ²⁸ Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. ²⁹ He gives strength to the

weariness, And to *him who* lacks might He increases power. ³⁰
Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men
stumble badly, ³¹ Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new
strength; They will mount up *with* wings like eagles, They will run
and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

This is the Almighty God whose will and ways are inscrutable and
not to be questioned as He is Creator and Lord of all. And this is
why Paul ends this section of our text in the way he does.

Romans 11:36 ³⁶ For from Him and through Him and to Him are
all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.

Our Lord Jesus gave the promises of eternal life to our father
Abraham and he faithfully passed those promises on as God
continued to extend those promises to Isaac and Jacob. It would be
Jacob, whose name was changed by God to Israel, who would be
given the privilege to carry the name of God.

Ultimately, Israel would be found disobedient and cut off from
presence of God. But through their disobedience the rest of the
world would find mercy and grace through the Redeemer who
came through Israel.

God is all powerful, sovereign, and has a will to save a people for
Himself from every tribe, tongue and nation. All glory goes to Him
alone.

Colossians 1:13-17 ¹³ For He rescued us from the domain of
darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴
in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵ He is the
image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by
Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth,
visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or
authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for
Him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in Him all things hold
together.

Praise God!