

Romans 11:25-27 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[Romans 11:1](#)
[Romans 11:2](#)
[Romans 11:3](#)
[Romans 11:4](#)
[Romans 11:5](#)
[Romans 11:6](#)
[Romans 11:7](#)
[Romans 11:8](#)
[Romans 11:9](#)
[Romans 11:10](#)
[Romans 11:11](#)
[Romans 11:12](#)
[Romans 11:13](#)
[Romans 11:14](#)
[Romans 11:15](#)
[Romans 11:16](#)
[Romans 11:17](#)
[Romans 11:18](#)
[Romans 11:19](#)
[Romans 11:20](#)
[Romans 11:21](#)
[Romans 11:22](#)
[Romans 11:23](#)
[Romans 11:24](#)
[Romans 11:25](#)
[Romans 11:26](#)
[Romans 11:27](#)
[Romans 11:28](#)
[Romans 11:29](#)
[Romans 11:30](#)
[Romans 11:31](#)
[Romans 11:32](#)
[Romans 11:33](#)
[Romans 11:34](#)
[Romans 11:35](#)
[Romans 11:36](#)

Summary of Romans 9-11

Romans 9	Romans 10	Romans 11
Past Election	Present Rejection	Future Reception
God's Sovereignty Israel's Election by God	Man's responsibility Israel's Rejection of God	God's Ways Higher God Not Rejecting Israel

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](#)

Greek: [Ou gar thelo](#) (1SPAS) [humas agnoein](#), (PAN) [adelphoi, to musterion touto, hina me ete](#) (2PPAS) [\[par'\] heautois phronimoi, hoti porosis apo merous to Israel gegonen](#) (3SRAI) [achris ou to pleroma ton ethnon eiselthe](#), (3SAAS)

Amplified: Lest you be self-opinionated (wise in your own conceits), I do not want you to miss this hidden truth and mystery, brethren: a hardening (insensibility) has [temporarily] befallen a part of Israel [to last] until the full number of the ingathering of the Gentiles has come in ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

ESV: Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers:[3] a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ([ESV](#))

ICB: I want you to understand this secret truth, brothers. This truth will help you understand that you do not know everything. The truth is this: Part of Israel has been made stubborn. But that will change when many non-Jews have come to God. ([ICB: Nelson](#))

NIV: 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. ([NIV - IBS](#))

NKJV: For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

NLT: I want you to understand this mystery, dear friends, so that you will not feel proud and start bragging. Some of the Jews have hard hearts, but this will last only until the complete number of Gentiles comes to Christ. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Now I don't want you, my brothers, to start imagining things, and I must therefore share with you my knowledge of God's secret plan. It is this, that the partial insensibility which has come to Israel is only to last until the full number of the Gentiles has been called in. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: For I do not desire you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning this mystery, in order that you may not be wise in yourselves, that hardening in part has come to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in.

Young's Literal: For I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, of this secret -- that ye may not be wise in your own conceits -- that hardness in part to Israel hath happened till the fulness of the nations may come in;

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS				
Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION
God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	Gods Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied
God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
Life by Faith				Service by Faith

Related resources...

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- [Zechariah 13 Commentary - on site](#)
- [Zechariah 14 Commentary - on site](#)
- [Summary on the Attributes of God](#)
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- [Israel of God - Is God "Finished" with Israel in His prophetic plan?](#)
- [Table Comparing/contrasting Israel & Church](#)
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- [Does the Church Fulfill Israel's Program- — Part 3 - Walvoord](#)

Online Book by Dr John Walvoord - Israel in Prophecy

- [Chapter I The New State Of Israel](#)
- [Chapter II The Promise To Abraham](#)
- [Chapter III Israel's Future As A Nation](#)
- [Chapter IV The Promise Of The Land To Israel](#)
- [Chapter V The Kingdom Promised To David](#)
- [Chapter VI The Suffering Of Israel](#)
- [Chapter VII The Glorious Restoration Of Israel](#)
- [Selected Bibliography](#)

Online Articles by Arnold Fruchtenbaum related to Israel

- [Israelology: Part 1 of 6 Introduction: Definition of Terms](#)
- [Israelology: Part 2 of 6 Israel Present \(Note: Article begins on Page 2\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 3 of 6 Israel Present \(Continued\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 4 of 6 - Israel Future \(Part One\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 5 of 6 - Israel Future \(Part Two\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 6 of 6 Other Relevant Topics - Illustrations of Israel \(including marriage\)](#)

Are you confused about God's plan for Israel? Then I highly recommend Tony Garland's 12 Hour Course on **Romans 9-11** in which he addresses in depth the question of **What Will Happen to Israel?** ([click](#)) or see the individual lectures below)

- [Romans 9:1-5 Paul's Sorrow Concerning Israel](#)
- [Romans 9:6-13 Children of the Promise](#)
- [Romans 9:14-24 The Potter and the Clay](#)
- [Romans 9:25-33 A Remnant Will be Saved](#)
- [Romans 10:1-13 The Righteousness of God](#)
- [Romans 10:14-21 Has Israel Not Heard?](#)
- [Romans 11:1-6 God Has Not Cast Away The Jews](#)
- [Romans 11:7-15 Life from the Dead](#)
- [Romans 11:16-24 Two Olive Trees](#)
- [Romans 11:25-36 The Salvation of Israel](#)

Note that when you click the preceding links, each link will in turn give you several choices including an **Mp3 message** and brief transcript notes. The Mp3's are long (avg 70+ min) but are in depth and thoroughly Scriptural with many quotations from the Old Testament, which is often much less well understood than the NT by many in the church today. Garland takes a literal approach to Scripture, and his love for the Jews and passion to see them saved comes through very clearly in these 12 hours of teaching! Take your home Bible Study group through this series if you dare. Take notes on the tapes as the transcripts are a very abbreviated version of the audio messages. This course is highly recommended for all who love Israel! I think you will agree that Tony Garland, despite coming to faith after age 30 as an engineer, clearly has been given a special anointing by God to promulgate the truth concerning Israel and God's glorious future plan for the Jews. Garland has also produced more than 20 hours of superb audio teaching in his verse by verse commentary on the [Revelation](#) (in depth transcripts also available) which will unravel (in a way you did not think was possible considering the plethora of divergent interpretations) God's final message of the triumph and return of the our Lord Jesus Christ as the King of kings and Lord of lords! Maranatha! (See **Maranatha - In Depth Word Study**)!

FOR I DO NOT WANT YOU, BRETHREN, TO BE UNINFORMED OF THIS MYSTERY: Ou gar thelo (1SPAS) humas agnoein (PAN), adelphoi, to musterion touto:

- Ps 107:43; Hosea 14:9; 1Corinthians 10:1; 12:1; 2Peter 3:8) (Ro 16:25; Ephesians 3:3,4,9; Revelation 10:7
- [Romans 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

I do not want you to miss this hidden truth and mystery, brethren (Amplified)

For (gar) is a conjunction which means **because** (see **term of explanation**). Whenever you see a verse begin with **for**, a good habit to develop is to ask yourself "**Because** of what?" "Why is this **for** at the beginning of the passage?" "What is Paul linking it with?" Observe that Paul has just asked "**how much more** shall these who are the natural branches (the Jews) be grafted into their own olive tree?" (see note Romans 11:24) Paul had just explained the olive tree which represents the promises given to the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) which were rooted in the Abrahamic covenant. He had stated that the olive tree was a cultivated olive tree, and that the Gentiles who are participating in it as branches grafted in are not the natural branches, which are Jews. In light of this truth, Paul wants the Gentiles to understand that there is greater potential (**how much more**) for unbelieving Israel to come to faith than there was for Gentiles who are saved by adopting that which has a Jewish "foundation". In other words, Christianity was founded on the OT Scriptures which were the privileged possession of the Jews and we Gentiles have come to believe in a Jewish Messiah. Paul's point is that we Gentiles need to think about this dynamic (**for I do not want you brethren to be uninformed...**). If we Gentiles who were unnatural branches came to believe in the Messiah as our Savior, **how much more** likely is it for God to turn unbelieving Jews of Israel to faith in Messiah. In other words, the Jews have a much greater affinity and natural connection than Gentiles. And yet we Gentiles (wild olive branches) did come to faith, even though we had less affinity for the natural olive tree. And since this has happened to you Gentiles, don't be surprised when Israel comes to faith in what is often incorrectly regarded as a "western religion" for in fact more accurately Christianity is in its origin a "middle eastern religion".

I do not want you - Not identifies (**ou**) the absolute negation. So Paul is saying in the strongest way possible he does not want his readers to be ignorant of what he is about to explain. Clearly the truth Paul is about to reveal must be very important.

Uninformed (50) (**agnoeo** from **a** = not + **noéo** = perceive, understand) means to not have information about, to not know, to be unaware of or to be ignorant of. The **present tense** speaks of being continually ignorant. Ignorance in this area is not bliss but leads to one becoming wise in their own mind. The ignorance can be as simple as the fact that one has never been taught the truth inherent in the mystery or that the preaching in one's church is shallow and tends to avoid non-seeker friendly "controversial" topics as in Romans 9-11. The most heinous reason for ignorance is not that one has not heard the truth, but having heard the revelation of this mystery makes a conscious choice to reject it! There is what I would interpret as a subtle form of "anti-Semitism" in the church today, in which some believers simply do not like the fact that God has a chosen nation called Israel and that He is not finished with them. **Dearlly beloved, how is your heart in this area?**

Mystery (3466) (**musterion** from **mustes** = one initiated [as into the Greco-Roman religious "mystery" cults] from **mueo** = to close or shut) (Click for in depth study of **musterion**) as used in the NT speaks of some truth which is not discoverable apart from being revealed by God. Mystery in the NT is a truth previously unknown but now revealed. Thus Paul is not using "mystery" like we do in modern parlance as something "mysterious", something "unknown". Quite the opposite is true, for when mystery is used in the NT it refers not to a truth which is difficult to understand, but to a truth previously unrevealed (and therefore unknown) which is now revealed and publicly proclaimed.

Here in **Romans 11:25** the **mystery** revealed is that Israel's blindness or hardening is (1) **partial** (not complete - see notes below and study of the Jewish believing **remnant** through the ages) and (2) temporary (it will last only until the time when all the Gentiles

whom God will save have in fact been saved [have "come in"]).

Mystery refers to the activity of God in salvation history, once hidden (Romans 16:25), but now made known to His people by revelation. The content of this mystery embraces Israel's present hardening--which is **partial** because the **believing Jewish remnant** constitutes an exception and because the hardening is limited in duration, lasting only **"until"** (up to the point in time) the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

SO THAT YOU BE WISE IN YOUR OWN ESTIMATION: hina me ete (2PPAS) (par) heautois phronimoi:

- Ro 12:16; Proverbs 3:5, 6, 7; 26:12,16; Isaiah 5:21
- [Romans 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Lest you be self-opinionated (wise in your own conceits) (Amplified)

So that (hina) means in order that and is a **term of purpose or result** (always pause to ponder this strategic term) The application is clear. If believers today remain uniformed about God's plan for the Jews (the mystery revealed here by Paul) in the End Times, the result is that they will become **wise in their own estimation**. And sadly this is what has occurred in much of the church over the centuries and to a large extent in our own day.

Lest you be wise in your own estimation - Paul was concerned that some Gentile believers would be wise in their own estimation and would assume that racial distinctions (Jew and Gentile) no longer exist. And so Paul explains that God

Several **Bible paraphrases** bring out the idea nicely...

This truth will help you understand that you do not know everything ([International Children's Bible: Nelson](#))

so that you may not be conceited ([NIV - IBS](#))

so that you will not feel proud and start bragging ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Estimation (5429) (phronimos from **phronéo** = think, have a mindset from **phren** = mind) means wise, prudent, having the capacity to understand, often in the daily things of life and implies a cautious character.

Phronimos describes one who is thoughtful, sagacious or discreet. It describes the quality of one's thinking which is the result of insight and stands in opposition to moros which means foolish. The idea is that there is understanding combined with wisdom and insight. Phronimos implies a cautious, sensible, prudent character and in Mt 10:16 refers to one as "shrewd" as a serpent. One who is shrewd has clever discerning awareness, acute perception and sharp powers of judgment. Phronimos also includes the ideas of one who is prudent, sensible and practically wise in relationships with others. There is a type of phronimos that is desirable (eg, here in Mt 7:24, 10:16, et al) and a type that is not desirable (Ro 11:26, 12:16) this latter describing the person who relies on their own innate wisdom.

Paul's point is that when Christians become conceited it is because they think they have understanding but sadly the **mystery** revealed here in Romans 11:25 is still mysterious to them! 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 but is designed to display further the glory of God. Remember Paul has said if God can save Gentiles (unnatural branches) how much more will He be able to save all of Israel (natural branches) in His perfect timing!

THAT A PARTIAL HARDENING HAS HAPPENED TO ISRAEL: hoti porosis apo merous to Israel gegonen (3SRAI):

- [Romans 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Partial (3313) (meros from **meiromai** = to get as a section or allotment) describes a division or share and thus a portion or a part (cf remnant).

What does Paul mean by **partial**? Is he saying that all of the Jews are "partially blind"? Or does he mean that **complete** blindness applies to **part** of the Jews? From the **context** (see verses discussed below - Ro 9:6-7, 11:1, 11:2-4, 11:5 - all allude to a remnant or part of the whole nation) the latter interpretation is the more accurate interpretation

Marvin Vincent a Greek scholar agrees writing **"Not** partial hardening, but hardening extending over a part."

Paul had alluded to this **partial hardening** in Romans 9 writing "it is not as though the word of God has failed. For **they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel**; 7 neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." (See **notes** Romans 9:6; 9:7)

Underline **partial**. Don't forget this truth. Only **some of the branches were broken off** (see note Romans 11:17). Certainly God is saving Jews in our own time and in fact He has always had a Jewish **remnant** (see study) of men and women who believed in Yeshua, their Messiah as their personal Redeemer. Thus not only was the unbelief **partial** but it will also be **temporary** as indicated by the time phrase **until** as discussed more below. Notice that Paul himself a Jew now believing in Messiah is evidence that the blindness or hardening was only partial. In fact, Paul opened Romans 11 with the truth that God has always preserved a remnant of believing Jews. For example, in Romans 11:1 [note] Paul presents himself as an example of that the hardening is partial, and in Romans 11:2, 3, 4 (notes Ro 11:2, 3, 4) he draws an illustration from the OT in the Divine response to Elijah that God had preserved a remnant of 7000. Then based on these examples, Paul emphasizes that...

In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time **remnant** according to God's gracious (not merited) choice. (See **note** Romans 11:5)

Paul doubly emphasizes that this **remnant** was in no way based on merit but on grace writing...

But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. 7 What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen (elect) obtained it, and **the rest** (the remaining ones = the remnant) were **hardened** (verb **poroo** - means to make hard like stone and thus calloused and insensitive to touch. In NT **poroo** is used only in a spiritual sense of hardened hearts in Mk 6:52; 8:17 Jn 12:40, of hardened minds in 2Cor 3:14). (See **notes** Romans 11:6; 11:7)

And so we see that Paul is returning to the subject with which he had begun Roman 11 to explain how God would work out His plan for **His people** whom He had not rejected. Beloved, the church needs to remember that God is not finished with Israel. Anyone who teaches that is conceited and lacks understanding of the mystery in this passage! [Replacement theology \(see excellent summary\)](#) is such an aberrant conceited understanding, in which the basic premise is propounded that God is finished with Israel because the Church is now the **Israel of God** (notes)!

Hardening (KJV = "Blindness") ([4457](#)) (**porosis** related to **poroo** [see [note above](#)] = to harden or petrify from **poros** = small piece of stone broken off from a larger one) means to made hard like a stone, and so callous or insensitive to touch.

When referring to the joints of the body, the verb **poroo** signified the stiffening of one's joints. Applied to the eyes, **poroo** meant blindness and this latter secular use led the translators of the KJV to render **porosis** as "blindness".

Barclay remarks that **porosis** was used as a "medical word, and it meant a callus (on skin this a thickened, hard area). It was specially used for the callus which forms round the fracture when a bone is broken, the hard bone formation which helps to mend the break. When a callus grows on any part of the body that part loses feeling. It becomes insensitive. The minds of the mass of the people have become insensitive; they can no longer hear and feel the appeal of God."

There are only 2 other NT uses of **porosis**...

Mark 3:5 And after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their **hardness** (**porosis**) of heart, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

Ephesians 4:18 (note) being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the **hardness** (**porosis**) of their heart;

All 3 NT uses of **porosis** are figurative two specifying the heart as the "organ" that was hardened. Arteriosclerosis or hardening of the arteries of the heart will take a person to the grave, but spiritual hardening of the heart will take them to hell (unless God grants deliverance as in Romans 11:26) **Porosis** is thus a callousness or dullness to spiritual matters.

William Barclay has another note writing that...

Porosis comes from **poros**, which originally meant a stone that was harder than marble. It came to have certain medical uses. It was used for the chalk stone which can form in the joints and completely paralyze action. It was used of the callus that forms where a bone has been broken and re-set, a callus which is harder than the bone itself. Finally the word came to mean the loss of all power of sensation; it described something which had become so hardened, so petrified that it had no power to feel at all. That is what Paul says the heathen life is like (Ephesians 4:18-note) It has become so hardened that it has lost the power of feeling. In the Epistle to a Young Friend, Robert Burns wrote about sin:

"I waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard of concealing;
But och! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling!"

The terror of sin is its petrifying effect. The process of sin is quite discernible. No man becomes a great sinner all at once. At first he regards sin with horror. When he sins, there enters into his heart remorse and regret. But if he continues to sin there comes a time when he loses all sensation and can do the most shameful things without any feeling at all. His conscience is petrified. (This is because all men in Adam are totally depraved & have an inherent sin nature from Adam to commit sins). ([Daily Study Bible Commentary - Ephesians 4](#))

In short, Paul paints the picture of hearts of a portion of Israel attaining to such a state in which a figurative callus had grown over their spiritual heart, making them insensitive and incapable of receiving the teaching regarding the Messiah. And so the first part of the **mystery** that is revealed is that there is partial hardening but of those affected, the hardening is complete.

Has happened - This verb is in the **perfect tense** which indicates that the hardening has occurred at a point in time in the past and is still in effect at the time of Paul's writing. And if anyone could understand this spiritual hardness and insensitivity, it would be Paul, who was violently opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, even assenting to the stoning of Stephen in Acts 8:1 Luke recording that "Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death."

The **Geneva Study Bible** notes are not a bad interpretation of this hardness (blindness) explaining that "The **blindness** of the Jews is neither so universal that the Lord has no elect in that nation, neither will it be continual: for there will be a time in which they also (as the prophets have foretold) will effectually embrace that which they now so stubbornly for the most part reject and refuse."

UNTIL THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN: achri ou to pleroma ton ethnon eiselthe (3SAAS):

- Ps 22:27; 72:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14,17; 127:1; Isaiah 2:1-8; 60:1-22; 66:18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23; Micah 4:1,2; Zechariah 8:20, 21, 22, 23; 14:9-21; Rev 7:9; 11:15; 20:2, 3, 4
- [Romans 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The second aspect of the **mystery** revealed is that the hardening has a definite lifespan and will end as identified by the conjunction **until**. The prerequisite condition for the hardness to depart is also specified **as when the fulness of the Gentiles has come in**

Regarding the conjunction **until**, **Robertson** refers to this as "a temporal clause...until which time". (Word Pictures)

Until - This word is frequently a strategically placed **expression of time**, especially in prophetic writings and therefore it behooves the diligent student of the Word of Truth to pause and ponder this time phrase, at least asking what happens next, etc.

Until ([891](#)) (**achri**) in this context is an adverb of time (it can also be used of place but that is not the present context). Here **achri** is a conjunction expressing time up to a point. Up to what point is the question then? Or when is **Until**? When is this **partial hardening** no longer **partial** but in fact lifted by God? Paul answers this declaring that it is when **the fulness of the Gentiles has come in** at which time **all Israel will be saved** (Ro 11:26) which in turn is associated with the Deliverer's return or Messiah's Second Coming (Mt 24:31, Zec 12:10, 13:9), which will occur at the end of **Daniel's Seventieth Week**.

Fullness ([4138](#)) (**pleroma** from **pleroo** = make full, fill, fill up) describes fullness, a full measure, an abundance or a completion. **Pleroma** can describe a time period when all that is intended to be done during that period is accomplished. **Pleroma** is that which has been filled and thus refers to that which is to a sum total, to a complete amount, or a full number, in this case the "full number" of Gentiles who will come to belief in Messiah. The **NET Bible** conveys the meaning clearly rendering it "A partial hardening has happened to Israel until **the full number** of the Gentiles has come in." ([NET Bible](#))

When all the Gentiles whom God has chosen for salvation during the present age of Israel's rejection have experienced salvation, God will carry out the events and effects described in Romans 11:26-note.

The **fulness of the Gentiles** does not necessarily equate with the removal of the church (as stated by C I Scofield) because we know that after the removal of the church there will be a great harvest of souls some of which appear to be Gentiles, John recording that "After these things I looked, and behold, a **great multitude**, which no one could count, **from every nation** and **all tribes** and **peoples** and **tongues**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands...These are the ones who (continually) come out of the **Great Tribulation**, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Re 7:9; 7:14 See [notes Re 7:9; 14](#))

These Gentiles are saved **out of the Great Tribulation**. Are these the last Gentiles to be saved? Although some associate the "fulness of the Gentiles" with the end of the **Great Tribulation** others feel the time phrase is more vague.

Morris for example states that "When the full number (known only to God) has been reached...God will begin again to deal with Israel as His elect nation." ([Defenders Study Bible](#))

Fulness of the Gentiles vs Times of the Gentiles

Is the fulness of the Gentiles the same as the times of the Gentiles? They certainly sound similar but notice that fulness is not a synonym of times, so there is some distinction between these terms. Luke introduces the term the **fulness of the Gentiles** in chapter 21 teaching that "Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until **the times of the Gentiles** be fulfilled. (Luke 21:24)

What characterizes these **times**? Is Luke speaking of the salvation of the **Gentiles**? Clearly, Luke is not referring to the salvation of Gentiles in this passage but to their exercise of political power and/or dominion over the city of Jerusalem by the Gentiles. In marked contrast, Paul speaks of the **fulness** which does refer to salvation of the Gentiles and not to their dominion over Jerusalem. Although both these descriptions occur over a period of time and that time undoubtedly overlaps significantly, we need to be accurate in our handling of these terms and retain the distinction intended by Luke and Paul. The **times of the Gentiles** began with the first sacking of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 586BC (Note: that some commentators feel these times begin with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD). In either case these **times** extend to the Second Coming of Christ, for at that time the Gentile dominion will be removed as Messiah returns, defeats the Gentile powers gather to destroy Israel and sets up His **Millennial Kingdom** on earth. At that time God will fulfill His promises to the redeemed nation of Israel, including the promise of "the Land" (see Ge)

Some commentators merge the two statements about the **Gentiles**. For example **Henry Morris** writes that "God is now "[visiting] the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name" (Acts 15:14). When the full number (known only to God) has been reached, then **the times of the Gentiles** (Ed note: More accurately "the fullness of the Gentiles") will end (Luke 21:24), and God will begin again to deal with Israel as His elect nation. ([Defenders Study Bible](#))

Comment: Morris seems to merge these two phrases together and while certainly overlapping to a large extent, they still describe separate events as Dr Walvoord explains more fully below.

Dr Walvoord explains that "When the two concepts, **the times of the Gentiles** and **the fullness of the Gentiles** are compared, it becomes evident that the **times of the Gentiles** is primarily a political term and has to do with the political overlordship of Jerusalem. By contrast, the term **the fullness of the Gentiles** refers to the present age in which Gentiles predominate in the church and far exceed Israel in present spiritual blessing. It becomes clear, therefore, that, while the two concepts may be contemporaneous at least for much of their fulfillment, the termini of the two periods are somewhat different. The **times of the Gentiles** will end only when Israel will permanently gain political control of Jerusalem at the second advent of Christ, whereas the **fullness of the Gentiles** will be completed when God's present task of winning Jew and Gentile to Christ is completed. (**The Times of the Gentiles**". Bibl Sac Vol 125. Issue 497. Page 9, 1968) ([See Walvoord's article The Times of the Gentiles](#))

Understanding God's Prophetic Revelation (Romans 11:25-27) Steven Cole

I spent the summer of 1969 with some other seminary students in a work/study/mentoring situation with Bill Counts and Hal Lindsey at the "Jesus Christ Light & Power House" in West Los Angeles. Hal was busy writing his book on prophecy, The Late Great Planet Earth. He would come to our meetings and beg us to go to Christian bookstores and ask them to order that book. He was afraid that it wouldn't sell. As it turned out, it sold over 15 million copies and was the best selling book of the decade!

If you want to write a best seller, write it on prophecy! If you want to pack out a church, put on a prophecy conference. For some strange reason that I haven't quite figured out, Christians and non-Christians alike are drawn to the subject of biblical prophecy. Will Christians go through the tribulation? Who is the anti-Christ? What will trigger Armageddon? Does Israel have a divine right to the land? Will they tear down the Dome of the Rock Mosque and rebuild the Temple? What about the Palestinians? Just this week the Israeli Prime Minister met with our President to discuss whether Israel should launch an attack on Iran before Iran perfects a nuclear

weapon that could annihilate Israel.

While these issues are fascinating to speculate about, they usually end up with people walking away no different than they were before. But by way of contrast,

biblical prophecy is always given for some practical effect. It calls sinners to repent before the coming judgment. It comforts believers with God's sovereignty over world events, including persecution. It exhorts believers to holiness. And, in the case of our text, it is aimed at curbing our pride:

Paul writes "so that you will not be wise in your own estimation" (Ro 11:25).

As we have seen, in Romans 11:1-10, Paul shows that God's rejection of Israel was partial, not total. There was a remnant according to God's gracious choice. In Ro 11:11-32, he shows that God's rejection of Israel was temporary, not permanent. God will again restore the Jews as a nation and pour out His covenant blessings on them.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Romans: To God's Glory [Banner of Truth], pp. 161-162) observes that Paul gives five arguments (in Ro 11:1-24) that God is not finished with the Jews. First, in Ro 11:1, Paul says that he himself is proof: He is a Jew whom God has saved. Second (Ro 11:2-6), Paul shows that God has preserved a remnant of saved Jews. Third (11:16), he uses two parallel illustrations to show that because of God's promises to the patriarchs, He will bless their descendants. Fourth (Ro 11:23), he argues that God is able to graft the Jews back into the olive tree. Fifth (11:24), he argues that what God has done with the Gentiles proves that He is able to do it in the case of the Jews. I would add a sixth argument from Ro 11:12, 15: If Israel's failure led to the outpouring of blessing on the Gentiles, how much greater blessing will result from their salvation that God has promised?

But now Paul ends his arguments and makes a prophetic revelation. God has revealed something to Paul regarding the future of the Gentiles and Jews and he wants us to understand it so that we will grow in humility:

Understanding God's prophetic revelation of salvation history should curb our pride as we realize His sovereign plan and power.

Paul's opening phrase, "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed," is one that he uses frequently (Ro 1:13; 1 Cor. 10:1; 12:1; 2 Cor. 1:8; 1 Thess. 4:13) to introduce something that his readers may not know, but which Paul regards as important (Leon Morris, The Epistle to the Romans [Eerdmans/Apollos], pp. 61-62). "For" tells us that Paul is explaining what he has said earlier with regard to Israel's rejection not being permanent. He calls this information a mystery. This teaches us that...

1. The matters we are dealing with here are prophetic revelation, not theological speculation.

"**Mystery**" does not refer to some puzzle where we have to use our reason to piece together the clues to figure out what's going on. And contrary to the "mystery religions" of Paul's day (or the Freemasons of our day), it does not refer to secret knowledge that only the initiated inner circle can know. Rather, it means something that has been concealed and is unknowable by human reason, but which God has now revealed. Paul uses the word elsewhere to refer to various aspects of the Christian faith, but especially to the gospel and its inclusion of the Gentiles (Eph. 3:4-9; 6:19). Certainly the gospel of justification by faith alone was revealed in the Old Testament (e.g., Gen. 15:6; cf. Ro 4:3) and the fact that the Gentiles would be included was stated there (e.g., Isa. 11:10; 19:19-25; 42:1-4; cf. Matt. 12:18-21; Ro 15:9-12). But these truths could not be seen with clarity until Christ brought them into focus.

Thomas Schreiner (Romans [Baker], p. 614) outlines three elements of the mystery in Romans 11:25: (1) Part of Israel is hardened for a limited period of time; (2) the salvation of the Gentiles will precede the salvation of Israel; and (3) all Israel will eventually be saved. Paul may have understood these truths through meditating on the Old Testament in light of the gospel. But the word mystery indicates that God imparted special revelation to Paul on these matters, especially on the truth that Israel would go through a time of judicial hardening while the Gentiles came to salvation. Then the hardening would be lifted and "all Israel will be saved" (Douglas Moo, The Epistle to the Romans [Eerdmans], p. 715-717).

The point is that we cannot arrive at some of these profound biblical truths through human reason alone, and therefore we cannot boast in our knowledge of them. God had to reveal these truths to Paul, who conveyed them to us. Otherwise we could not have understood them. And sometimes, as in the next point that we're going to consider, we have to set aside our logical objections to the truth and recognize that God has spoken. We can either proudly argue with His revelation or humbly submit to it.

2. The prophetic revelation concerns God's sovereign, powerful working in salvation history.

As we have seen, Romans 9 emphasizes God's sovereignty in showing mercy to whom He wills and hardening whom He wills. Romans 10 emphasizes human responsibility. "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Ro 10:13), but Israel stubbornly refused to believe (Ro 10:21). In Romans 11:20-23a, the emphasis is on human responsibility to believe in Christ and to persevere. But from Ro 11:23b-29, the emphasis is on God's sovereignty. He is able to graft Israel in again (Ro 11:23-24). He has hardened Israel for a time during which He is bringing the full number of Gentiles to salvation (Ro 11:25). But after that time, He will

lift the hardening on Israel and bring their full number to salvation. He will do this by sending the Deliverer, removing ungodliness from Jacob, and fulfilling His covenant to take away their sins (Ro 11:26-27). While the Jews were currently God's enemies so that the Gentiles could come to salvation, at the same time God loved them because of His choice and His promise to the fathers (Ro 11:28). You can count on this because God's gifts and calling are irrevocable (Ro 11:29).

So while affirming human responsibility to repent and believe, Paul at the same time shows that God is in charge of salvation history, hardening some nations for a period of time while He works with others, and then reversing the process. These are God's unsearchable judgments and unfathomable ways that cause Paul to burst out in praise (Ro 11:33). But let's unpack this in more detail:

A. GOD IS POWERFUL TO HARDEN NATIONS AND TO LIFT THAT HARDENING, ACCORDING TO HIS SOVEREIGN PURPOSES.

Paul says (Ro 11:25), "that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in." We saw this in Ro 11:7-10. Paul also refers to it in 2 Corinthians 3:14-15, where Paul says in reference to the Jews, "But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart." Jesus referred to the same spiritual hardening or blindness in Matthew 13:13-16 with reference to His parables. It was a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (Isa 6:10), "Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed." It was God's sovereign judicial hardening of people in their disobedience and unbelief.

This is hard truth! God has the right to show mercy to whom He desires and to harden whom He desires (Ro 9:18). If we cry, "That's not fair!" we are contending with the Divine Potter, who has the right to make vessels for honorable or common use as He determines (Ro 9:20-21). If God were fair, everyone would be condemned because all are guilty before Him. God is not required to show mercy to all. We can either rail against God for what we think is unfair or we can submit to God as the sovereign who has the power to harden or to show mercy. You will not understand the doctrine of election until you bow before God and yield all of your rights to Him, recognizing that if He dealt with you on the basis of fairness, you would be eternally condemned.

The staggering thing about what Paul says here is that for about 2,000 years now, the Jews have for the most part been hardened against the gospel because their ancestors cried out (Matt. 27:25), "His blood shall be on us and on our children!" Not all were hardened, in that there has always been a remnant of saved Jews according to God's gracious choice (Rom. 11:5). And the hardening is "partial" in that eventually, it will be lifted. But be careful! If you say, "It's not fair that a Jewish boy or girl living hundreds of years after Christ should be hardened because of the sins of their distant ancestors," you have just charged God with unfairness! Those who make such a charge do not understand God's sovereign right to be God or the utter sinfulness of all people in His holy presence.

That's the negative side of God's sovereign, powerful working in salvation history. But, thankfully, there is a positive side:

B. THE FUTURE SALVATION OF ISRAEL IS NOT JUST A POSSIBILITY, BUT A CERTAINTY, BECAUSE GOD HAS DECREED IT.

Paul is not expressing a holy wish, "I hope that someday all Israel will be saved," but rather a prophetic certainty: "All Israel will be saved." But there is a lot of controversy over the meaning of the text here that we need to sort out.

First, the Greek phrase translated "and so" can be interpreted in several ways. Without going through all of them, the most likely meaning is, "in this manner." The idea is, "In the same manner that God has hardened Israel while He brought the Gentiles to salvation (described in Ro 11:11-24), so once the full number of Gentiles has been saved, God will use that to provoke the Jews to jealousy so that they will be saved" (Moo, p. 720). As God sovereignly orchestrates the fullness of the Gentiles, so He will do with the Jews (see Ro 11:12, 15).

But there is also controversy over the phrase "all Israel." Many early church fathers and later the Reformers and their followers argued that "all Israel" refers to all of God's elect throughout history, both Jews and Gentiles. But in Romans 9-11 Paul uses "Israel" ten times and every use refers to ethnic Israel (Moo, p. 721). The context of these chapters deals with the question of why the Jews were not coming to Christ while the Gentiles were. And clearly "Israel" in Ro 11:25 and "they" in Ro 11:28 both refer to the Jews in contrast to the Gentiles. So it is unlikely that Paul would change his meaning in Ro 11:26.

Another view is that "all Israel" refers to the elect within Israel (as in Ro 9:6). The meaning would then be that eventually the full number of the elect Jews will come to salvation. But this is stating the obvious. And, this would require a shift in meaning between Ro 11:25, where "Israel" refers to the nation generally, to a more narrow meaning in Ro 11:26. Also, it is hard to understand how the completion of the number of elect Jews will be seen as a dramatic event referred to as "life from the dead" (Ro 11:15). And so the best meaning is that "all Israel" means the nation in general.

But what does “all” mean? Most commentators agree that it does not mean every single Jew who has ever lived, nor every Jew living in the end times when the hardness is lifted. The phrase “all Israel” is used often in the Old Testament to refer to most of the nation, but not to every single Jew in the nation (Josh. 7:25; 1Sa 7:5; 2Sa. 16:22; 1Ki 12:1; 2Chr 12:1; Da 9:11; see Moo, p. 722, note 55). So Paul’s meaning for “all Israel will be saved” is that after the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, God will lift the judicial hardening and the great majority of Jews living at that time will turn to Christ with saving faith.

And the point is that it is not that God looked down through time and saw that the Jews would believe of their own free will, and so He told Paul how things would turn out. Rather, things will turn out this way because God decreed that they will turn out this way. He is sovereignly, powerfully working in salvation history for His own purposes and glory.

C. THE FUTURE SALVATION OF ISRAEL INCLUDES THE COMING OF THE DELIVERER, THE REMOVAL OF UNGODLINESS, AND THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, IN ACCORD WITH GOD’S COVENANT.

Briefly note five things:

(1). ISRAEL AND THE GENTILES ARE SAVED IN THE SAME WAY, THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST THE DELIVERER.

Some wrongly teach that there are two ways of salvation, one for the Gentiles and another for the Jews. But there has always been only one way of salvation, namely, to trust in God’s provision of a Savior or Deliverer, who is Jesus Christ the Lord. In the Old Testament, the Jews looked forward to the final and perfect sacrifice who would bear their sins. We look back to Christ as the Lamb of God. But both Jews and Gentiles are a part of the same tree, not separate trees. This is not to say that there are no distinctions between Israel and the church, but it is to say that we are all partakers of the same promise of the Savior that God gave to Adam and Eve in the Garden (Ge 3:15) and later to Abraham (Ge 12, 15, 17).

(2). THE COMING OF THE DELIVERER MOST LIKELY MEANS THAT ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED EITHER JUST PRIOR TO OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

Some argue that verse 26 refers to Christ’s first coming, but at that time Jesus did not remove all ungodliness from Jacob and all Israel was not saved. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (pp. 190-191, 232-234) argues that it refers to a spiritual coming of Christ out of His spiritual dwelling place with His people (“Zion”) at some time in the future that will result in widespread conversion of the Jews. But most commentators understand this as a reference to either just prior to or at the time of the second coming, when Christ will come out of the heavenly Zion (Schreiner, p. 619).

Zechariah 12:10 predicts, “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.” Perhaps even as Paul was converted by seeing the risen Savior, so all Israel will be dramatically converted when the Lord intervenes to save them from national destruction at Armageddon and then appears in glory (Zech. 14:1-4). But we can’t be dogmatic on the details of these future events.

(3). THE REMOVAL OF UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB REMINDS US THAT THERE IS NO SALVATION APART FROM REPENTANCE.

“He will remove ungodliness from Jacob” (from the LXX of Isa. 59:20) is another way of referring to salvation. “Ungodliness” refers to the “unbelief” of Ro 11:23 (Schreiner, p. 620). But to describe salvation as “removing ungodliness” shows, as all Scripture affirms, that saving faith always involves repentance. Granted, it is a lifelong process that is never perfected until we are with the Lord. But if we claim to believe in Christ but live in persistent disobedience, one day we will hear Him say the frightening words, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness” (Mt 7:23).

(4). THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS IS THE PRIMARY NEED OF EVERY PERSON.

Romans 11:27: “This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.” Paul combines Isaiah 59:21 and 27:9 (see Moo, p. 729). “I take away their sins” reminds us that salvation is not primarily a psychological matter of moving from low self-esteem to proper self-esteem, as Robert Schuller claims. Nor is it a matter of Jesus helping you to succeed in your family life or career. Salvation meets our fundamental need to be reconciled with the holy God through His just forgiveness of all our sins through the death of Christ (Ro 3:26).

(5). THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS IS BASED ON GOD’S COVENANT PROVISION THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

Some (Moo, p. 728) argue that Paul is referring here to the Abrahamic covenant. But the language also reminds us of the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-44; Morris, p. 422). But the point is, because it is God's covenant, it is a sure thing. He always keeps His covenant promises (Ro 11:29). And so Paul's prophecy shows God's sovereign, powerful working in salvation history.

But, as I said, God doesn't give us prophetic revelation so that we can draw up nifty charts of the end times. There is always a practical aspect to it:

3. Prophetic revelation is given to curb our pride and to deepen our burden for the lost, not to stoke curiosity about the future.

Paul gives us this information "so that you will not be wise in your own estimation" (Ro 11:25). The Gentiles were prone to think that they were hot stuff because they were saved and to look down on the unbelieving Jews because they had rejected Christ. We're all prone to think that God saved us because somehow we're a notch above others and He saw something worth saving in us that others lack. But that is to deny God's grace. And, if we look down on other sinners and think that they deserve judgment (forgetting that we deserve it just as much as they do), we will not reach out to them with the gospel. One way to hasten the conversion of the Jews is to finish the task of evangelizing the Gentiles, because when the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, God will lift the partial hardening on the Jews and bring them to salvation en masse.

Conclusion - So test your understanding of God's prophetic revelation of salvation history by this: Does this truth humble you as you realize that except for the grace of God, you could have been born at a time when the Gentiles were "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" (Eph. 2:12-note)? But as Paul goes on to say (Eph. 2:13-note), "But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." God's sovereign working in salvation history should produce humble gratitude in our hearts. Also, does this truth burden your heart for those who are outside of Christ, whether Jew or Gentile? While God is sovereign over salvation history, as we saw (Ro 10:14-15-note), He uses those whom He has saved to proclaim the good news to those who need to hear it in order to believe. Understanding God's prophetic revelation should motivate us to proclaim to all that "the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him" (Ro 10:12-note). ([Understanding God's Prophetic Revelation](#))

Romans 11:26 and **so all Israel will be saved; just** as it is **written**, "THE **DELIVERER** WILL **COME** FROM **ZION**, HE WILL **REMOVE UNGODLINESS** FROM **JACOB**." ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [kai houtos pas Israel sothesetai](#); (3SFPI) [kathos gegraptai](#). (3SRPI) [hexei ek Sion o rhuomenos](#). (PMPMSN) [apostrepsei](#) (3SFAI) [asebeias apo Iakob](#):

Amplified: And so all Israel will be saved. As it is written, The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will banish ungodliness from Jacob. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

ESV: And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; ([ESV](#))

ICB: And that is how all Israel will be saved. It is written in the Scriptures: "The Savior will come from Jerusalem; he will take away all evil from the family of Jacob. ([ICB: Nelson](#))

NIV: And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. ([NIV - IBS](#))

NKJV: And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

NLT: And so all Israel will be saved. Do you remember what the prophets said about this? "A Deliverer will come from Jerusalem, and he will turn Israel from all ungodliness. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Once this has happened, all Israel will be saved, as the scripture says: 'The deliverer will come out of Zion, and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob, ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: And thus all Israel shall be saved, even as it stands written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn ungodliness from Jacob.

Young's Literal: and so all Israel shall be saved, according as it hath been written, 'There shall come forth out of Sion he who is delivering, and he shall turn away impiety from Jacob,

AND SO ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED: kai houtôs pas Israel sothesetai (3SFPI):

- Isa 11:11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16; 45:17; 54:6, 7, 8, 9, 10; Jer 3:17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23; 30:17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22; 31:31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37; Jer 32:37, 38, 39, 40, 41; 33:24, 25, 26; Ezek 34:22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31; 37:21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28; 39:25, 26, 27, 28, 29; Ezek 40:1-48; Hos 3:5; Joel 3:16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21; Amos 9:14,15; Mic 7:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20; Zeph 3:12, 13, 14,15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20; Zech 10:6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12) (Ps 14:7; 106:47; Isa 59:20
- [Romans 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

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- [Does Satan Have a Special Hatred for Israel and the Jewish People?](#)
- [Are Today's Jews the Physical Descendants of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the Israelite Tribes?](#)

And so - In this way, so -The **thus** seems to correlate with with the **until** of verse 25, thereby acquiring temporal force, such as "when that has happened."

And so - Important marker of continuation of Paul's argument.

All Israel - This phrase has been interpreted primarily in one of three ways (and only one can be correct). The "candidate" interpretations are that **all Israel** is...

1) The NT Church composed of Jews and Gentiles.

2) The elect remnant of believing Jews during this present age.

3) The literal ethnic nation of Israel.

4) **Every individual Jew who ever lived** - There is absolutely no suggestion elsewhere in Scripture that Paul means that every individual Jew that ever lived will be saved. (e.g., Mt 11:24 "*Nevertheless I* (Jesus as He began to reproach the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent) *say to you* (Jews) *that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you!*")

All Israel will be saved - Notice first, Paul does not say "**might** be saved" but "**will** be saved"! This is not just a possibility but is an **absolute certainty**! And it is to transpire in the **future**.

Note also that literally the text says **all Israel** and the plain reading would take this as indicating **all** of the nation of **Israel**. In fact, if you are a new Christian who is reading this text and you have not been biased by someone's teaching on this verse, you are probably wondering why give such a lengthy discussion to a topic that seems so obvious on simple reading. In other words, in your reading of the text you probably read **Israel** and that is what you interpreted it as - **Israel**.

Unfortunately some commentators spiritualize (see related topics [\[i.\] Art and Science of Interpretation](#); [\[ii.\] The Rise of Allegorical Interpretation](#); [\[iii.\] Understanding Symbols and Figures](#)) this phrase **all Israel** and distort it to mean "spiritual Israel" or what they interpret to be the "church". In my opinion this interpretation has a faulty foundation for they usually base it on a misinterpretation of the phrase **Israel of God** in **Galatians 6:16** (See [1] notes **Israel of God**; [2] [Table on Israel & Church](#) [3] excellent audio lecture - [Is the Church Israel?](#)), where the Church is said to be the spiritual Israel! Without going into the technical arguments (the interested reader is encouraged to review the studies just noted) all through the NT **Israel** is literally the nation of **Israel**. (See offsite study on [The Use of the Term "Israel" in the NT](#)) To make **all Israel** anything but literal **Israel** in this chapter is poor hermeneutics (science of Interpretation). Why do I say that? Remember that **context** is king in regard to accurate **Interpretation**. Context and usage of a term by the author (in this case Paul's use of Israel especially in Romans 9-11) are critical in establishing the meaning of a text. We are not free to interpret terms in any way we would like. What is the immediate **context** of Romans 11:26? What has Paul clearly been discussing for 3 chapters (Romans 9, 10, 11)? Eleven times (counting Romans 11:25) Paul uses the specific name **Israel** (Ro 9:6; 27; 31;10:19; 10:21; 11:2; 7; 25; 26-see **notes** Ro 9:6; 27; 31;10:19; 10:21; 11:2; 7; 25; 26). Take a moment and read each of his uses. How many of them refer to the literal nation of Israel? I think if you take the plain sense of the text as your rule, you will agree that every use prior to Romans 11:26 refers to the **literal nation of Israel**. Why would Paul try to "fool" us or confuse us by all of a sudden introducing a new, non-literal meaning for the name **Israel**? That makes no

sense whatsoever. The clear, logical conclusion is that Paul intends Romans 11:26 to also indicate the nation of Israel and not the church! Paul in fact has just warned Gentile believers not to be **arrogant** (twice - see Romans 11:18-note), **conceited** (Romans 11:20-note) or **wise in your own estimation** (note Romans 11:25-note)! A number of Gentile commentators seem to have conveniently disregarded the practical application of Paul's warnings! (E.g., see the offsite analysis of [Covenant Theology](#))

Here is an example from **John Calvin** a highly respected commentator (and rightly so) who interprets this passage in **anon-literal sense** writing that

Many understand this of the Jewish people, as though Paul had said, that religion would again be restored among them as before: but I extend the word **Israel** to **all the people of God**, according to this meaning, — “When the Gentiles shall come in, the Jews also shall return from their defection to the obedience of faith; and thus shall be completed the salvation of the whole Israel of God, which must be gathered from both; and yet in such a way that the Jews shall obtain the first place, being as it were the first-born in God’s family.”

Do you see what Calvin has done with Romans 11:26? He is saying that Israel in this passage is not just the Jews but is all the people of God, both Gentile and Jew. Now think about the logic of Calvin's interpretation -- Why would Paul have to clarify a mystery if all those who are of the household of faith, both Jew and Gentile, who are going to come to faith, will eventually come to faith?! That is hardly a mystery to say that all those who will be saved, will in fact be saved!

It is interesting to read the interpretation by Charles Hodge who is a covenant theologian and therefore one who we would expect would spiritualize **all Israel**, but he does not writing that...

From the context (**Ed note:** Notice what Hodge uses as his plumb line to aid accurate interpretation of this passage - context), **Israel** here must mean the Jewish people, and **all Israel** the whole nation. The Jews, as a people, are now rejected; as a people they are to be restored. As their rejection, although national, did not include the rejection of every individual, so their restoration, though also national, need not include the salvation of every individual Jew. **All Israel** does not mean here **all the true people of God**, as **Augustine, Calvin**, and others explain it; nor **all the elect Jews** — i.e., all that part of the nation which constitute “the remnant according to the election of grace” — but the whole nation, as a nation. ([Commentary on Romans](#)) (Bolding added) (To this interpretation we can only say "Amen!")

David Brown in Jamieson, Fausset and Brown although an older commentary has an excellent comment writing that "To understand this great statement, as some still do, merely of such a gradual inbringing of individual Jews, that there shall at length remain none in unbelief, is to do manifest violence both to it and to the whole context. It can only mean the ultimate **ingathering of Israel as a nation**, in contrast with the present “remnant.” (So Tholuck, Meyer, De Wette, Philippi, Alford, Hodge). Some of these critics would seem to advocate the inbringing of every individual Israelite; others, only of 'the mass' or 'majority,' but if they mean simply, 'the nation at large,' as opposed to 'a remnant,' they have brought out, as it appears to us, the precise idea of the apostle. ([Commentary on Romans 11:26](#))

John Piper in a sermon he preached in 1982 agrees observing that

"In the context of Ro 11:12 (note "their fulfillment"), Ro 11:15 (note "their acceptance...life from the dead"), it is unwarranted to interpret **all Israel** here to mean anything other than **corporate, ethnic Israel**. So one of my guiding principles in reading Old Testament prophecy about Israel is that **there is a glorious future ahead, when Israel will repent, turn to Christ, and be saved**. (Read his full sermon [There Shall Be A Fountain Opened](#)) (Amen!)

Piper also had this comment on Zechariah 13:1 (see my commentary)

Finally we ask, for whom does this opened fountain provide cleansing? Who can read Zechariah and find personal hope in it? **The most obvious answer is the Jewish people. (NOTE CAREFULLY - HE DOES NOT SAY "THE CHURCH!")** Even though they have displeased God (1 Thessalonians 2:15) by rejecting his Son, their Messiah, to this day, God still promises mercy. He will one day lift the veil off their minds (2 Corinthians 3:14), take away the hardening of their hearts (Romans 11:25), and pour out a spirit of grace and supplication upon them, and they will turn to Jesus and confess him as Lord and Christ. We may even be seeing the beginnings of that final outpouring in the contemporary messianic Jewish movement. And we should pray for all our Jewish friends and associates, and speak to them with boldness about Christ.

In summary, **all Israel** in **Romans 11:26** means **all Israel**. (See Master's Thesis paper by Matthew Waymeyer (Pdf) - [Romans 11:26 The Identity of "All Israel"](#))

The next question is **when** will all Israel be saved? What is the nearest time phrase? Clearly Paul has given us a clue for he has just stated that this will not occur **until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in**. The terminus of this event as discussed is difficult to state with absolute dogmatism. The juxtaposition with another event however that can be accurately "timed" gives us a strong clue. In other words, in this same verse Paul describes the return of Israel's Messiah. Therefore one can reasonably associate the time in which all Israel will be saved with the time of the return of Christ, which we know from other passages occurs at the end of the Great Tribulation.

All Israel will be saved. This will take place when Christ returns to earth to establish His **millennial** kingdom centered in Jerusalem (Zec 12:8, 9, 10, 13:1, 14:9), following the Great Tribulation period (Mt 24:15, 21) (see **Daniel's Seventieth Week**)

Will be saved ([4982](#)) (**sozo**) (Click in depth study on sozo) has the basic meaning of rescuing one from great peril and here refers to **salvation** in a spiritual sense (God granting repentance and regeneration). Additional nuances of **sozo** include to protect, keep alive, preserve life, heal, make whole.

The complete restoration of Israel will climax the purging trials of "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer 30:7), which corresponds to the time Jesus referred to as "the Great Tribulation" (Mt 24:21+)

How will God bring about the fulfillment of **all Israel will be saved**? Let's look first at a passage in Zechariah that is clearly prophetic and has no identifiable fulfillment in history so that it must be yet future. The prophet records...

(God declares) "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd (God the Son, the Messiah), and against the man, My Associate (one in close, united relation)," Declares the LORD of hosts (God the Father). "Strike (beat, wound, slay, kill, smite) the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered (dispersed, scattered abroad); And I will turn My hand against the little ones.

8 "And it will come about in all the land," Declares the LORD, "That two parts in it will be cut off (karath - severe something from something) and perish (die); But the third will be left in it.

9 "And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'" (Zechariah 13:7, 8, 9+)

Comment: Zechariah 13:7 is quoted by Jesus in Matthew 26:31 and Mark 14:27 as He identifies Himself as the **Shepherd**. To **strike the Shepherd** is clearly a prophecy of the Crucifixion. Although some take the sheep may be scattered as referring to the disciples, the alternative interpretation favored by Arnold Fruchtenbaum (in his book [The Footsteps of the Messiah](#)) is that Messiah's "sheep, Israel, were scattered throughout the world" which is in fact what happened in the dispersion of the Jews after Messiah was Crucified. And so what we see verse 7 is a reference to Messiah's **first coming** and verses 8-9 a reference to His **Second coming**. (see discussion of time gaps in prophecy) Why do we say that? Because there is no time in history in which 2/3's of Israel has been killed (Hitler killed about 1/3 in the Holocaust). Furthermore, notice the results regarding the remaining 1/3. They will be refined (refined by the time of Jacob's trouble, the Great Tribulation) and call on My Name (if you have been to Israel today you know that most of modern Israel is secular not orthodox so this prophecy has not yet been fulfilled). Thus Zechariah is describing events which are yet future when 1/3 will survive the purging and constitute the **all Israel** who will be saved.

As **John MacArthur** says "From the midst of their fiery refinement, the elect remnant of Israel will see Jesus Christ, their Messiah and call on Him as their Savior and Lord. **Israel will thus be saved** and restored to covenant relationship with the Lord." To reiterate this is the **all Israel** who will be saved in Romans 11:26 - it is the 1/3 of the nation of Israel who believe on their Messiah.

John MacArthur explains that **all Israel** refers to "All the elect Jewish people alive at the end of the Tribulation, not the believing remnant of Jews within the church during this church age. Before **all Israel** is saved, its unbelieving, ungodly members will be separated out by God's inerrant hand of judgment. Ezekiel makes that truth vividly clear (Ezekiel 20:33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, cf. Da 12:10; Zech 13:8, 9+) ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

In Daniel's great prophecy that begins in Daniel 10 and runs unbroken through Daniel 12 (it is all one subject), Daniel relates God's prophecy concerning His dealings with Israel, many of these prophecies having already been fulfilled in history (especially the section of Daniel 11:34), but from Daniel 11:35-12:13 is future prophecy regarding Israel. In this section Daniel has passages that parallel Zechariah 13:7, 8, 9+ and speak of God's final purging of Israel which result in the saved remnant of one third...

And some of those (Israel) who have insight will fall, in order to refine, purge, and make them pure, until the

end time (here is another "time gap" which jumps at least 2000 years to the time of the end, almost certainly the Great Tribulation); because it is still to come at the appointed time. (Daniel 11:35+)

Many (context = Jews) will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked (Jews) will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. (Daniel 12:10+)

The **Bible Knowledge Commentary** notes that "**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 (Ezekiel 20:34, 35, 36, 37, 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). ([Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., et al: The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 1985. Victor](#))

Ezekiel 20 is mentioned in both of the preceding comments and describes the time when Christ will enter into judgment with those Jews who have survived the Great Tribulation. As described below He will determine who is saved and only the Jews He brings into the Covenant (the text does not state it, but undoubtedly those Jews who are saved at this time will be saved by grace through faith) will enter into His **Millennial Kingdom**. Ezekiel records

33 "As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out (this wrath cumulates in the last 3.5 years, the Great Tribulation), I shall be king over you (cp, Jesus' Second Coming which John describes as the "King of kings" which parallels this passage in Ezekiel - see Revelation 19:16-[note](#)). 34 And I shall bring you (Israel, all ethnic Jews) out from the peoples (the Gentiles) and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out (note emphasis of wrath - see similar phrase in note on [Revelation 16:1](#) - this verse introduces the last 7 Bowl Judgments which occur in the last 3.5 years); 35 and I shall bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and **there I shall enter into judgment with you face to face**. 36 "As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you," declares the Lord GOD. 37 "And I shall make you pass under the rod, and I shall bring you into the bond of the covenant (save them as they express personal faith in the New Covenant -Jeremiah 31:31 - see study of New Covenant in the Old Testament); 38 and I shall **purge** from you the (Jewish) rebels and those (Jews) who transgress against Me; I shall bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but **they will not enter the land of Israel (Millennial Kingdom)**. Thus you will know that I am the LORD. (Ezekiel 20:33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38) (Some think this time of judgment described by Ezekiel refers to the judgment that occurs during the "Tribulation", especially the last 3.5 years but others favor a separate time of Judgment when the King will separate the believing and unbelieving Jews at the time of His return, much like the separate judgment of the Gentile "sheep and goats" - see Mt 25:31ff. These respective judgments determine who enters the Millennial Kingdom in the flesh so to speak. They are those who will "people" the kingdom. It is notable that all allowed into the Messianic Kingdom initially will be believers.)

The Messianic Jew **Arnold Fruchtenbaum** commenting on Ezekiel's prophecy writes that "The rebels among the Jewish people will be purged out by this judgment. Only then will the whole new nation, a regenerate nation, be allowed to enter the Promised Land under King Messiah. ([Fruchtenbaum, A. G. The Footsteps of the Messiah : A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events. Rev. ed.. Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries](#))

See also Arnold Fruchtenbaum's series:

- [Israelology: Part 1 of 6 Introduction: Definition of Terms](#)
- [Israelology: Part 2 of 6 Israel Present \(Note: Article begins on Page 2\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 3 of 6 Israel Present \(Continued\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 4 of 6 - Israel Future \(Part One\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 5 of 6 - Israel Future \(Part Two\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 6 of 6 Other Relevant Topics - Illustrations of Israel \(including marriage\)](#)

JUST AS IT IS WRITTEN "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION": kathos gegraptai (3SRPI) hexei (3SFAI) ek Sion ho rhuomenos (PMPMSN):

- Matthew 1:21; Acts 3:26; Titus 2:14
- [Romans 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

As it is written - This is a "formula" that speaks of an Old Testament reference.

Written (1125) (grapho) is in the **perfect tense** which emphasizes the lasting and binding authority of that which was written. It has been written at some point in time in the past and it "stands" written.

In **Psalm 14:7** David cries out in prayer...

Oh, that the salvation (Hebrew = **Yeshua** - Jesus' Hebrew name is Yeshua, cp Mt 1:21 "*Jesus...will save His people from their sins*" - Jesus is the "**Salvation of Israel**") **of Israel would come out of Zion** (Jerusalem, see Isaiah 2:3-note)! When the LORD restores His captive people, Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad.

Note that at the **Second Coming** Christ's feet touch the the **Mount of Olives** (the very place of His **Ascension** - cp Acts 1:9, 10, 11) which splits from north to south (see Zech 14:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). Here in Romans 11:26 Christ fulfills the prediction that "**THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION**." In the frequent mention of Christ in His Second Coming in relation to **Zion** as revealed in the Old Testament, the prophets predict both that Christ will come **to Zion** (cp Zech 14:1-9) and that thereafter He will come **out of Zion** as indicated by the following passages

May He send you help from the sanctuary, and support you **from Zion**! (Psalm 20:2)

Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come **out of Zion**! When God restores His captive people, Let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad. (Psalm 53:6)

The LORD will stretch forth Thy strong scepter **from Zion**, saying, "Rule in the midst of Thine enemies. (Ps 110:2)

Comment: Ryrie writes that "At His second coming (during the Millennium) Messiah will rule this earth from Zion (Jerusalem) on the throne of David (Is 2:3-note; Is 4:3, 4, 5-note; Zech. 8:3; 14:3).

And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways, And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth **from Zion**, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (Isa 2:3-note)

And the LORD roars **from Zion** and utters His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth tremble. But the LORD is a refuge for His people and a stronghold to the sons of Israel. (Joel 3:16)

Comment: Note the context - the previous verse says "15 The sun and moon grow dark, And the stars lose their brightness." which perfectly parallels Mt 24:29, 30, the signs that signal the Second Coming of the Lord.

To reiterate, here in **Romans 11:26** we encounter God's answer to David's prayer. Sometimes God's answers are delayed for a while! This is an interesting principle to keep in mind when we don't receive or perceive God has answered our cries to Him. And another reason to keep praying without ceasing! Don't grow weary. You have not seen the end of the story.

Paul now substantiates the declaration concerning the future of Israel by appealing to the witness of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah citing his words from **Isaiah 59:20, 21** and **Isaiah 60:1, Isaiah 27:9**...

Isaiah 59:20 And a **Redeemer** (Hebrew = **Ga'al/Goel** [see word study on Kinsman Redeemer]; Septuagint [Lxx] translates Redeemer with the verb **rhuomai** = deliver, Deliverer) will come to Zion, and to those who **turn** (Hebrew = shub/sub [word study] = turn back, repent, turn away from [see use in Ezek 14:6]; Lxx = **apostrepho** = turn away from) from **transgression** (Hebrew = **pesha'** = fundamental idea of root is breach of relationships, between parties; Lxx = **asebeia** = ungodliness) in Jacob," declares the LORD. **21** And as for Me, this is My covenant (**berit/berith/beriyth**) 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."

Comment: What covenant? This is the New Covenant first promised in a Jewish context in Jeremiah 31:31. Who is the covenant with? God says **with them** and in context **them** are the Jews **who turn from transgression**, which would correlate with those who are saved in Romans 11:26. Note that it is God Who initiates the New Covenant and in it He promises, pledges and binds Himself to Israel (those who are saved by grace through faith) so that He becomes their God and they become His people (these are now the Jews not just outwardly by lineage, but inwardly by the Spirit [Romans 2:28; 29-note] Who "**circumcises**" their heart and gives them a new heart and a new spirit [see Deut 30:6, Ezekiel 36:26,27-note]).

It is interesting and somewhat sad to see how we Gentiles in the church age during which Israel is partially

hardened, so quickly overlook (or perhaps have never been taught) that the **New Covenant** was first promised to Israel, not to the Gentiles, and that the New Covenant was inaugurated as it were by a Jew (Yeshua) in the company of 11 fellow Jews (His disciples at the Last Supper, which was actually the Jewish Passover!).

This background helps one understand Isaiah's prophecy and the fulfillment of that prophetic promise to Israel in Romans 11:25, 26, 27, for the gifts and calling and covenant of God with His chosen people are irrevocable.

To be sure, then, the New Covenant has a distinctly Jewish "flavor" but notice how Jesus described the New Covenant to His Jewish disciples declaring

this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for **many** for forgiveness of sins.
(Mt 26:28).

Who is included in the **many**? Jesus answers for us in John declaring that

as **many** as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name (John 1:12-note).

Praise God, the **many** is any who believe and thus God has flung the door wide open for we **Gentiles** to also enter into the New Covenant by grace through faith. What can we do but fall on faces in worship and thanksgiving, echoing Paul's great anthem of praise...

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! (Romans 11:33-note)

Isaiah 60:1 Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

Compare Isaiah 60:1 to the following passage...

Isaiah 27:9 Therefore through this Jacob's iniquity will be forgiven; And this will be the full price of the pardoning of his sin: When he makes all the altar stones like pulverized chalk stones; When Asherim and incense altars will not stand.

Deliverer (4506) (**rhuomai** from **rhúo** = to draw, drag along the ground) (Click for in depth study of **rhuomai**) means to draw or snatch to oneself and invariably refers to a snatching from danger, evil or an enemy. This basic idea of rescuing from danger is pictured by the use describing a soldier's going to a wounded comrade on the battlefield and carrying him to safety (he runs to the cry of his comrade to rescue him from the hands of the enemy).

Rhuomai emphasizes the greatness of the peril from which deliverance is given by a mighty act of power. **Rhuomai** is more the idea of rescue or draw to oneself whereas **sozo** is more the idea of preserve from.

In the Septuagint (LXX) **Rhuomai** translates the Hebrew word **goel/ga'al** (see ISBE article on **Goel**).

- Play Rich Mullins great song - [My Deliverer](#)

HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB: apostrepsei (3SFAI) asebeias apo lakob:

- Matthew 1:21; Acts 3:26; Titus 2:14
- [Romans 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

He will remove (654) (**apostrepho** from **apo** = away from, a marker of dissociation, implying a rupture from a former association and indicates separation, departure, cessation, reversal + **strepheo** = turn quite around, twist, reverse, turn oneself about) means literally to turn back or away. In the present context **apostrepho** means to remove anything from anyone, in this case to remove ungodliness. See the discussion of Ezekiel 20:33-38 in the preceding section where God states that He will purge the rebels and they will not enter into the the land of Israel (**Millennial Kingdom**)

Ungodliness (763) (**asebeia** from **asebes** = impious, ungodly, wicked from **a** = w/o + **sédomai** = worship, venerate) means want or lack of reverence or piety toward God (which speaks of one's heart attitude) and thus living without regard for God and in a way that denies His existence and right as Supreme Ruler and Authority (which speaks of one's actions emanating from one's attitude). This word suggests an utter disregard for the existence of God and leads naturally to a lack of reverence or awe for God. Such a person will live in a way that denies God's existence and His right as Supreme Ruler and Authority.

BDAG adds that in general **asebeia** "is understood vertically as a lack of reverence for deity and hallowed institutions as *displayed* in sacrilegious words and deeds: impiety; its corollary *adikia* refers horizontally to violation of human rights." ([A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#))

Asebeia suggests a disregard of the existence of God, a refusal to retain Him in knowledge and a habit of mind leads to open rebellion. It is a general reference to all that is "**anti-God**". **Ungodliness** is the attitude and action that describes every sinner who has not trusted the Lord Jesus for salvation.

Hiebert adds that ungodliness is "suggestive of the whole inner and outer life of the one who lives without God and in opposition to His law."

From Jacob ([Dictionary Articles](#)) - Jacob in this context is not individuals per se but stands for **Israel**, specifically all those in Israel who will repent and place their faith in Yeshua their Messiah. Note that the name **Jacob** is never used to refer to the church, another piece of evidence that undercuts the interpretation of those who would try to equate the Church with **Israel** in the phrase **all Israel will be saved**.

Our Heavenly Father - As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him. --Psalm 103:13 ([Spurgeon's note](#))

In a moment of exasperation, a father told me that if his son continued in his rebellious ways he was going to disinherit him and try to forget him. But I knew that father well. Although he was angry, hurt, and disappointed, I was sure he would never quit loving his son and longing for his conversion.

Good parents cannot forget how they cared for their children as infants, how they helped them take their first steps, and how they shared with them in both happy and painful growing-up experiences. But when children choose a sinful lifestyle, even good parents, after repeated pleas and warnings, may have no choice but to let them go their own way. Parents will do so with broken hearts and with the undying hope that their prodigal will one day return.

In Hosea 11, God is portrayed as Israel's Father. Because the nation had disobeyed, He had pleaded with them and chastened them time and time again. Yet they refused to change their ways. Finally, God withdrew from them and let them learn the hard way. Yet even then, He could not and would not completely abandon them. One day He will draw them back to Himself (Romans 11:26-27).

God loves His children today with that same kind of tough love. What a wonderful heavenly Father! —Herbert Vander Lugt [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

At times we spurn our Father's love
And choose a sinful path;
Yet He will not abandon us,
Though righteous in His wrath. —D. De Haan

**God loves us not because of who we are,
but because of Who He is.**

Romans 11:27 **THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.** ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [kai aute autois e par' emou diatheke, hotan aphelomai](#) ([1SAMS](#)) [tas hamartias auton](#).

Amplified: And this will be My covenant (My agreement) with them when I shall take away their sins. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

ESV: "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." ([ESV](#))

ICB: And I will make this agreement with those people when I take away their sins." Isaiah 59:20-21; 27:9 ([ICB: Nelson](#))

NIV: And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins." ([NIV - IBS](#))

NKJV: For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."

NLT: And then I will keep my covenant with them and take away their sins." ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: for this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins'. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: And this to them is the covenant from me when I shall take away their sins.

Young's Literal: and this to them is the covenant from Me, when I may take away their sins.'

AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS: kai aute autois e par emou diatheke, hotan aphelomai (1SAMS) tas hamartias auton:

- Isaiah 55:3; 59:21; Jeremiah 31:31, 32, 33, 34; 32:38, 39, 40; He 8:8, 9-**notes**, He 8:10-**note**, He 8:12-**note**; He 10:16-note
- Isaiah 27:9; Hosea 14:2; John 1:29
- [Romans 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Resources on Covenant...

- Covenant: As It Relates to Marriage
- Covenant: Why Study It?
- Covenant: Introduction
- Lesson 1 Covenant: Summary Table
- Lesson 2 Covenant: The Exchange of Robes
- Lesson 3 Covenant: The Exchange of Armor and Belts
- Lesson 4 Covenant: Solemn and Binding
- Lesson 5 Covenant: A Walk Into Death
- Lesson 6 Covenant: The Oneness of Covenant
- Covenant: Oneness Notes
- Lesson 7 Covenant: Withholding Nothing from God
- Lesson 8 Covenant: Abrahamic versus Mosaic
- Lesson 9 Covenant: New Covenant in the Old Testament
- Lesson 10 Covenant: Why the New is Better
- Lesson 11 Covenant: Abrahamic vs Old vs New

My covenant with them - With who? Who is "them?" In context of Romans 11 (Paul has been speaking of his people, the ethnic Jews), this clearly is Jehovah's immutable covenant with Israel. He is not speaking of the church in this specific context.

Covenant ([1242](#)) (**diatheke** from **diatithemi** = set out in order, dispose in a certain order <> from **dia** = two + **tithemi** = to place pictures that which is placed between two Thus, a covenant is something placed between two = thus an arrangement between two parties) literally conveys the idea of a testament, as in one's last will and testament.

A covenant is an agreement between two parties that binds them together and conveys the associated ideas of very close fellowship (even oneness and identity as for example in the marriage covenant where two mystically become one flesh).

Cleon Rogers describes **covenant** in the ancient world as...

the uniting and community of the souls and wills of the two, which results in a common purpose, common friends, common enemies, mutual confidence, loyalty, and exclusion of strife. In all of this the will of the stronger was the dominating force. This resulting harmony is often described by the word Shalom which stresses the wholeness, harmony, and unity of the two. Along with this unity there was also the obligation to help or aid one another in time of trouble. Because of these tremendous implications it was always advisable to proceed with caution before making a covenant with anyone. (The Covenant with Abraham and Its Historical Setting. Bibliotheca Sacra. Volume 127. Issue 507. Page 240. 1970)

The 3 major meanings of **diatheke** in the NT can be summarized as...

- (1) A legal technical term used when one settles an inheritance and known by our familiar English term "last will and testament"
- (2) A binding contract between two or more persons, as in Galatians 3:15 where the covenant is between men.
- (3) The major NT (and Septuagint use) is a declaration of the will of God in "concerning His self-commitment, promises, and conditions by which he entered into relationship with man covenant, agreement" ([Friberg, T.,](#)

Diatheke was commonly used in the **Greco-Roman world** to define a legal transaction in settling an inheritance (used in this sense in Hebrews 9:16; 17- notes) which we often refer to as one's last will and testament. In this sense it referred to the disposition which a person made of his property in prospect of death.

Vine comments that...

Etymologically considered the (English) word **covenant** is formed from two others meaning "coming together," and thus describes a mutual undertaking between two or more parties who severally make themselves responsible for the discharge of certain obligations. But the Greek word **diatheke**, from which it is translated, does not in itself contain the idea of joint obligation, it means rather an obligation undertaken by one alone. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

NIDNTT adds that in classical Greek usage **diatheke**...

occurs from Democritus and Aristoph. onwards in the sense of a will or testament. It is not thought to be derived from the act. diatithemi, distribute, allocate, regulate, but only from the mid. diatithemai, control persons and things (Xen.), and especially dispose of by will (so private legal documents among papyri). It denotes, therefore, an irrevocable decision, which cannot be cancelled by anyone. A prerequisite of its effectiveness before the law is the death of the disposer. Hence diatheke must be clearly distinguished from syntheke, an agreement. In the latter two partners engaged in common activity accept reciprocal obligations. diatheke is found only once with this meaning (Aristoph. Birds, 1, 440). Elsewhere it always means a one-sided action. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

Covenant has profound implications and is the most solemn, binding, intimate contract known in the Bible. Covenant was considered a binding agreement among the ancients, and so was **not entered into lightly**. After pieces of the sacrificial animal were laid opposite one another, the individuals who were cutting covenant would walk between the flesh. This walk represented the so-called **walk into death** indicating their commitment to die to independent living and to ever after live for their covenant partner and to fulfill the stipulations of their covenant (See this practice in Jer 34:8ff, esp Jer 34:18-19). Furthermore, this **walk into death** was a testimony by each covenant partner that if either broke the covenant God would take their life, even as had been done to the sacrificial animal. In short, we see the gravity of entering into and then breaking covenant. Covenant was a pledge to death. A pledge cut in **blood**. In covenant the shedding of **blood** demonstrated as nothing else could the intensity of the commitment. By cutting covenant the two parties were bound for life. Thus the shedding of **blood** in the cutting of covenant established the gravity and binding nature of this transaction. Both the Old and the New Covenants were inaugurated with blood. The practice of cutting covenant is found throughout history with traces or remnants of covenant truth in every quarter of the globe. (See Introduction to Covenant and Summary of Major Biblical Covenants)

As noted, most of the NT uses of **diatheke** refer to God's declaration of His will concerning His self-commitment, promises, and conditions by which he entered into relationship with man.

Diatheke denotes an irrevocable decision, which cannot be cancelled by anyone. A prerequisite of its effectiveness before the law is the death of the disposer and thus **diatheke** was like a "final will and testament".

In reference to the divine covenants, such as the Abrahamic covenant, diatheke is not a covenant in the sense that God came to agreement or compromise with fallen man as if signing a contract. Rather, it involves declaration of God's unconditional promise to make Abraham and his seed the recipients of certain blessings.

All covenants are based on promises. Sometimes the promises are by only one party, sometimes by both. Sometimes the promises are conditional, sometimes they are not. But promises are always involved. As far as God's covenants are concerned, it is always His promises that are significant. Men break their promises, God does not. The benefits and the power are always from God's side, and therefore the significant promises are always from His side. Consequently, it is God's promises in the New Covenant that here are called "better."

Here are some general aspects of covenant as recorded in Scripture

(1) Initiated by one of the parties - In covenants with God, He is the Initiator (with Noah, Ge 6:18, with Abraham, Ge 17:7, cf Ge 12:1, 2, 3, 4, with Moses and Israel Ex 34:27, Jesus inaugurates the New Covenant, Mt 26:28, Lk 22:20, cf Isaiah 42:8, Mal 3:1). Examples of men who initiated covenants with other men include Abimelech with Abraham, Ge 21:27, 32; Abimelech with Isaac, Ge 26:28, Laban with Jacob, Ge 31:44).

(2) Sacrifice is usually involved - clean animals Ge 8:20, animals in Ge 15:10, Jesus' body and blood in the

New Covenant, Mt 26:28. The spillage of blood is usually a central part of the establishment of the covenant.

(3) Offspring are affected by the covenant- see Ge 6:18, 9:9, 9:12 (every living creature included here).

(4) Often accompanied by a promise or an oath - see God's promise in Ge 8:21 "I will never again destroy every living thing as I have done." In Genesis 17 (see initial promises in Genesis 12:1, 2, 3) God promises Abram (Abraham) "I will multiply you exceedingly...for I will make you the father of a multitude of nations...an everlasting covenant to be God to you and to your descendants after you. "And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

(5) A sign or witness often accompanies the establishment of covenant - Genesis 9:13 "My (rain) bow in the cloud... shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth." Cf circumcision in Ge 17:14. The "well of seven" (or of the oath) in Genesis 21 between Abraham and Abimelech.

(6) There is often a covenant meal - Isaac and Abimelech Ge 26:30, Laban and Jacob, Ge 31:54, meal in Ex 24:11 with the Mosaic covenant, the "Passover meal" (= Lord's Supper = communion) in Luke 22:30.

In our modern society and even in the evangelical church, we have for the most part forgotten the profound significance of **covenant** in Scripture. Yes, we can recite the covenants but few understand the symbolism and seriousness of Biblical covenants which were the closest, most indissoluble union two parties could make. Today we make "covenants" with fine print that allows one to "get out" of the agreement with relative ease. Take for example the sacred marriage covenant, which has all but lost its holy character in society in general (some are even talking of doing away with this covenant, and many are living together without marrying which in effect is an abolition of this covenant. See Covenant: As It Relates to Marriage) and tragically even in the evangelical church where surveys show divorce rates as high as among non-believers!

Andrew Murray, the gifted nineteenth century writer emphasizes the importance of more than a superficial understanding of covenant writing....:

Blessed is the man who truly knows God as his God; who knows what the Covenant promises him; what unwavering confidence of expectation it secures, that all its [covenant's] terms will be fulfilled to him; what a claim and hold it gives him on the Covenant-keeping God Himself. To many a man, who has never thought much of the Covenant, a true and living faith in it would mean the transformation of his whole life. The full knowledge of what God wants to do for him; the assurance that it will be done by an Almighty Power; the being drawn to God Himself in personal surrender, and dependence, and waiting to have it done; all this would make the Covenant the very gate of heaven. May the Holy Spirit give us some vision of its glory. ([Murray, Andrew: Two Covenants](#)) (See discussion of Covenant: Why Study It?)

The covenant between Jonathan and David in 1 Samuel 18 highlights the seriousness of covenant as it was understood by the ancients (see discussion of Covenant - Solemn and Binding and A Walk Into Death). When covenant was cut, there was a surrender of rights and a merger of individual natures, so that the two became one, signifying a oneness and identity with the other party. As a result of this oneness and identity each party became the other party's covenant defender. For more background on these profound concepts see Covenant -The Exchange of Robes and Exchange of Armor and Belts. The idea of two becoming one (cp the mystical union of marriage in Genesis 2:24) has several aspects including the co-mingling of blood, the sharing of a common life, the exchange of names, the sharing of a meal, the idea of friendship and the establishment of a memorial (eg, wedding rings, Lord's Supper "Do this in remembrance of Me!"). For a more thorough discussion the reader is encouraged to study the topics Part 6 The Oneness of Covenant and Covenant: Oneness Notes. Finally, we would be remiss if we did not emphasize that covenant conveyed responsibilities (see Covenant: Withholding Nothing from God). Finally, Scripture says "let the redeemed of the Lord say so" and my personal testimony is that as I began to study covenant, God used these profound truths to literally (and supernaturally) save my marriage covenant of 25 years (and 15 years as a believer). I firmly believe that if the truths of covenant were understood in churches across America, divorce rates would be drastically, supernaturally reduced as these truths transformed husbands and wives. (see Covenant: As It Relates to Marriage).

Without question the best way to truly understand covenant in the way I have attempted to summarize it, is to study these Biblical truths for one's self. And the best course available is the 11 week course of [Covenant \(click to download 20 page Pdf of Lesson 1 - the overview\)](#) produced by Precept Ministries International. This study will transform your life, your marriage, and your ministry. As one of my old medical school professors used to say "you can't not know" these truth about covenant. They are too important. Consider the fact for example that the Greek titles of the Scriptures are the "Old Covenant" and the "New Covenant" and our English word "Testament" is taken from the titles prefixed to the Latin versions. Covenant is what the entire Bible is about beloved. You can't not know!

Diatheke is used over 330 times in Septuagint (LXX) most often (some 270 times) to translate the Hebrew word [Beriyth](#) ([01285](#)).

See the excellent **ISBE** article [Covenant In The Old Testament](#). As discussed elsewhere, the ordinary Greek word for a compact was **syntheke** but this term was avoided by the Septuagint translators because it suggested the equal rank of the two parties, whereas the OT **Beriyth** is used for "a relationship between God and man graciously created by God, and only accepted by man".

In the NT, OT and LXX **diatheke** refers to a declaration of the will of God concerning His self-commitment, promises, and conditions by which he entered into relationship with man and with the descendents of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

In **Isaiah** God invited Israel to...

Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I will make an **everlasting covenant** with you, According to the faithful mercies shown to David. (Isaiah 55:3)

And 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." (Isaiah 59:21)

This is My covenant - What covenant? This refers to the **New Covenant**, which is in a sense a continuation of the Abrahamic Covenant, which was also an unconditional covenant, based on God's grace (i.e., not one's merit), initiated by God and entered into by personal faith.

In **Jeremiah** God makes a covenant promise to Israel that He will surely keep because He is a covenant keeping God.

Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. 33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all **know** (Yada - speaks of intimacy - it was the word used for a man "knowing" his wife in the most intimate way. Yada is often used in Scripture in a protective sense and refers to God's providential care and love, which includes the eternal security of believers and His divine provision. It means that God looks out for His righteous ones) Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jeremiah 31:31-34+)

Comment: Although this is the sole record of the phrase "new covenant", the truth of this covenant is expressed in a number of other OT passages - see discussion of the New Covenant in the Old Testament

When I take away their sin - What time is **when**? Many feel that this promise will be fulfilled by Messiah upon His return at the end of the Seven Year "Tribulation" or at the end of **Daniel's Seventieth Week**.

In the **Olivet Discourse** Messiah explained that...

immediately after the **tribulation** of those days (the last 3.5 years of Daniel's Seventieth Week = Great Tribulation) THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky ("the sign" = Himself in the sky), and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN (one of Jesus' favorite names for Himself) COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect (chosen ones) from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. (Mt 24:29-31+)

Comment: The **elect** would include the one-third of Israel who were to be saved.

To reiterate, neither Jesus nor Paul is saying that every Jew who has ever lived will be saved but only those who are among **the elect or the chosen** (the **remnant**) who are alive when Messiah returns. The **elect** will be those who place their faith in Messiah and be saved.

Jehovah had promised deliverance through His prophet **Zechariah** who recorded that...

it will come about in all the land" Declares Jehovah, "That two parts in it will be cut off and perish (in context "land" refers to the Jews), but the third will be left in it. And I will bring **the third part** through the fire, refine them (so clearly Jehovah is not referring to the land but to the people, those people) as silver is refined, And

test them as gold is tested. They (again this clearly indicates people not land) will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'" (Zechariah 13:8, 9+, compare Ezekiel 20:33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, Daniel 12:10).

Comment: This **one third** of Israel is the **all Israel** that will be saved, **all** those who are of the **elect** or the **remnant**. They shall **all** be saved. But they shall be saved by personal faith in the Messiah, for salvation has always been by grace and personal faith. See Ep 2:8,9-note

In the previous chapter **Zechariah** recorded Jehovah's gift of grace on the elect remnant of Jews...

And I (Jehovah) will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me Whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born. (Zechariah 12:10+)

Comment: This passage is clearly teaches that at the Second Coming of Messiah, Israel [one third of the nation] will have the scales lifted off their eyes and will recognize Yeshua as their Goel or Redeemer, and will acknowledge with deep contrition that He was the One Whom their forefathers pierced [John 19:37, cp Revelation 1:7-note].

Take away (cut off) ([851](#)) (**aphaireo** from **apó** = from + **hairéo** = take) means to put or take something away from its normal location, to put out of the way or to remove. It means to cause to cease. In the present context, **aphaireo** means to take away their sins and to procure the forgiveness of sin. Praise God He is able to take away the sins of both Jew and Gentile.

HE TOOK MY SINS AWAY

by Margaret J. Harris

[\(Lively vocal version!\)](#)

I came to Jesus, weary, worn, and sad.
He took my sins away, He took my sins away.
And now His love has made my heart so glad,
He took my sins away.

Refrain:

He took my sins away, He took my sins away,

And keeps me singing every day!

I'm so glad He took my sins away,

He took my sins away.

The load of sin was more than I could bear.

He took my sins away, He took my sins away.

And now on Him I roll my ev'ry care,

He took my sins away. (Refrain)

No condemnation have I in my heart,

He took my sins away, He took my sins away.

His perfect peace He did to me impart,

He took my sins away. (Refrain)

If you will come to Jesus Christ today,

He'll take your sins away, He'll take your sins away,

And keep you happy in His love each day,

He'll take your sins away. (Refrain)

The prophet **Isaiah** alludes to this taking away of Israel's sins...

(Jehovah speaking) "I, even I, am the One Who **wipes out** (Hebrew = machah = blot out utterly; Lxx = exaleipho = to cause to disappear by wiping, or remove so as to leave no trace, to obliterate) your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins. (Isaiah 43:25)

(Jehovah speaking) "I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud, And your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you." (Isaiah 44:22)

Peter exhorts his unregenerate Jewish audience in Acts 3 to...

Repent (aorist imperative) therefore and **return** (aorist imperative), that your sins may be **wiped away** (exaleipho = erased = Ancient writing was upon papyrus and the ink had no acid in it so therefore it did not bite into the papyrus like modern ink, but simply lay on top of it. To erase the writing a man simply wiped it away with a wet sponge. Even so God wipes out the sin of the forgiven man or woman, Jew or Gentile. Hallelujah!), in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you (Acts 3:19-20+)

The prophet **Micah** asks...

Who is a God like Thee, Who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love (because of His covenant to which He is bound). He will again have compassion on us (as amplified here in Romans 11:25, 26). He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, Thou wilt cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea. (Micah 7:18, 19+)

Comment: This promise was fulfilled in part in Acts for the remnant of Jews who believed in Messiah in response to Peter's preaching, but awaits its complete fulfillment at the return of the **Deliverer**.

The **psalmist** testifies that...

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Ps 103:12) [See Spurgeon's Comment](#)

Jeremiah explains how completely Messiah will **take away** their sins writing that...

And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jer 31:34+)

'In those days and at that time (What time? At the end of this age and beginning of the **millennium**),' declares the LORD, 'search will be made for the iniquity of Israel, but there will be none; and for the sins of Judah, but they will not be found; for I shall pardon those whom I leave as a **remnant**.' (Jeremiah 50:20)

In **Ezekiel** God reiterates that at the end of this age...

Then (indicates a time sequence - "then" is when the **Deliverer** returns) I will sprinkle clean water on you (Israel), and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers (This will be the final literal fulfillment of this aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant - and this promise is not for the Church as so many today believe but for the redeemed nation of Israel.); so you will be My people, and I will be your God. Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you (see a description of "the Land" including a map of illustrating changes even in the topography - description of the Messianic Kingdom in the Millennium) (Ezekiel 36:25-29+)