

# Romans 11:28-32 Commentary

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## Summary of Romans 9-11

Romans 9	Romans 10	Romans 11
<b>Past Election</b>	<b>Present Rejection</b>	<b>Future Reception</b>
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 11:28 From the [standpoint](#) of the [gospel](#) they are [enemies](#) for your [sake](#), but from the [standpoint](#) of God's [choice](#)

they are **beloved** for the **sake** of the **fathers**;

**Greek:** [kata men to euaggelion ecthroi di' humas kata de ten eklogen agapetoi dia tous pateras](#);

**Amplified:** From the point of view of the Gospel (good news), they [the Jews, at present] are enemies [of God], which is for your advantage and benefit. But from the point of view of God's choice (of election, of divine selection), they are still the beloved (dear to Him) for the sake of their forefathers.

**ESV:** As regards the gospel, they are enemies of God for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.

**ICB:** The Jews refuse to accept the Good News, so they are God's enemies. This has happened to help you non-Jews. But the Jews are still God's chosen people, and God loves them very much. He loves them because of the promises he made to their ancestors.

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

**NKJV:** Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.

**NLT:** Many of the Jews are now enemies of the Good News. But this has been to your benefit, for God has given his gifts to you Gentiles. Yet the Jews are still his chosen people because of his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

**Phillips:** As far as the Gospel goes, they are at present God's enemies - which is to your advantage. But as far as God's purpose in choosing is concerned, they are still beloved for their fathers' sakes.

**Wuest:** On the one hand, with reference to the gospel they are enemies for your sakes; on the other hand, with reference to the selected-out ones they are beloved ones for the fathers' sake;

**Young's Literal:** As regards, indeed, the good tidings, they are enemies on your account; and as regards the choice -- beloved on account of the fathers;

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	WORK OF SALVATION

Related resources...

- Summary on the Attributes of God
- Spurgeon on the Attributes of God
- Israel of God - Is God "Finished" with Israel in His prophetic plan?
- [Table Comparing/contrasting Israel & Church](#)
- [Does the Church Fulfill Israel's Program? - John Walvoord](#)
- [The Jewish People, Jesus Christ and World History - S Lewis Johnson](#)
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- [Eschatological Problems VI- The Fulfillment Of The Abrahamic Covenant - Walvoord](#)
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- [Does the Church Fulfill Israel's Program- — Part 1 - Walvoord](#)
- [Does the Church Fulfill Israel's Program- — Part 2 - Walvoord](#)
- [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**)!

**FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE GOSPEL THEY ARE ENEMIES FOR YOUR SAKE: kata men to euaggelion ecthroi di humas:**

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

**NLT** - Many of the Jews are now enemies of the Good News. But this has been to your benefit, for God has given his gifts to you Gentiles. Yet the Jews are still his chosen people because of his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

**NET** In regard to the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but in regard to election they are dearly loved for the sake of the fathers.

**CSB** Regarding the gospel, they are enemies for your advantage, but regarding election, they are loved because of the patriarchs,

**NRS** As regards the gospel they are enemies of God for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved, for the sake of their ancestors;

**NJB** As regards the gospel, they are enemies, but for your sake; but as regards those who are God's choice, they are still well loved for the sake of their ancestors.

- Ro 11:11,30; Mt 21:43; Acts 13:45,46; Acts 14:2; Acts 18:6; 1Th 2:15-16

#### Related Passages:

Acts 13:45-46 But when the Jews saw the crowds, **they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul**, and were blaspheming. 46 Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.

Acts 14:2 But the Jews who disbelieved **stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and embittered them** against the brethren.

Acts 18:6 But when they (JEWS) **resisted and blasphemed**, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

1 Thessalonians 2:15-16 (JEWS) **who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, 16 hindering us from speaking** to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost.

## ISRAEL ENEMIES OF THE GOSPEL

**From the standpoint of the Gospel (euaggelion) they (JEWS) are enemies (echthros) for your (GENTILES) sake** - See passages above illustrating how the Jews were enemies of the Gospel.

**For your sake**" takes us back to Ro 11:11-12+ where Israel's stumbling was for the Gentile's sake in that it made salvation available to the Gentiles.

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**Gospel** (2098) (euaggelion from eú = good + aggéllo = proclaim, tell) is literally good news or glad tidings. For a concise definition of the **Gospel** read 1Co 15:1-8+ = best description of the Gospel) (Also see similar notes 1Co 15:1; 15:2; 15:3; 15:4; 15:5; 15:6; 15:7; 15:8)

**Enemies** (hostile) (2190) **echthros** from échthos = hatred, enmity; noun = echthra = enmity, hostility) is an adjective which pertains to manifesting hostility or being at enmity with another, where enmity is a deep seated animosity or hatred which may be open or concealed or a "deep-rooted hatred." In the active sense **echthros** means to be hateful, hostile toward, at enmity with or adversary of someone. In the passive sense **echthros** pertains to being subjected to hostility, to be hated or to be regarded as an enemy. **Echthros** is one who has the extreme negative attitude that is the opposite of love and friendship. An enemy is one that is antagonistic to another; especially seeking to injure, overthrow, or confound the opponent. Scripture often uses **echthros** as a noun describing "the adversary", Satan! Like father like son!

**BUT FROM THE STANDPOINT OF GOD'S CHOICE THEY ARE BELOVED FOR THE SAKE OF THE FATHERS: kata de ten eklogen agapetoi dia tous pateras dia tous pateras:**

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

**NLT** - Many of the Jews are now enemies of the Good News. But this has been to your benefit, for God has given his gifts to you Gentiles. Yet the Jews are still his chosen people because of his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

- Ro 11:7; Isaiah 41:8,9
- Genesis 26:4; 28:14; Leviticus 26:40-42; Deut 4:31; 7:7,8; 8:18; 9:5; 10:15; Ps 105:8-11; Jeremiah 31:3; Micah 7:20; Luke 1:54,68-75

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 7:7-8+ "**The LORD did not set His love on you (ISRAEL)** nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but because **the LORD loved you (ISRAEL)** and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

## ISRAEL BELOVED OF GOD

**But from the standpoint of God's choice (ekloge) they (JEWS) are beloved (agapetos) for the sake of the fathers (pater)** - **But** (term of contrast) should always cause a pause and ponder what is being contrasted? Paul says that based on **God's choice** the Jews are beloved. We must not forget this truth! God is sovereign in their salvation and it is not because of any merit passed on from the patriarchs, but because God chose Israel and that choice was and is and forever will be irrevocable.

**For the sake of the fathers** is an allusion to the patriarchs and to God's unconditional, immutable covenant with Abraham, which was reaffirmed to Isaac and then to Jacob (Israel) (See Dt 7:7-8+ [above](#)). God is **faithful** to keep His covenant promises. (See related topics: Covenant: Abrahamic versus Mosaic; Covenant: New Covenant in the Old Testament ; Covenant: Why the New is Better; Covenant: Abrahamic vs Old vs New )

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**Choice (1589) (ekloge)** from eklegomai [**eklego**] in turn from **ek** = out + **lego** = select, choose, eklegomai meaning to choose or select for oneself, but not necessarily implying rejection of what is not chosen. See study of related word [eklektos](#) or [click here](#) = elect) means literally a choosing out, a picking out, a selection or an election (2Pe 1:10, 1Th 1:4 - referring to God's selection of believers). In the passive sense **ekloge** refers to God's selection for a purpose or task. In other words it represents a special choice as when God referred to Paul as "my chosen instrument" (Acts 9:15). In Ro 11:28 **ekloge** speaks of God's choice of Israel, who were selected by Him to carry out His specific plan of redemption for mankind.

**Beloved (27) (agapetos)** from **agapao** = to love, **agape** = unconditional love borne by Spirit - Gal 5:22+note) means beloved, dear, very much loved. Agapetos describes the love of another, this love being called out of the "giver's" heart by preciousness of the recipient of the love (the "beloved"). **Agapetos** is used only of Christians as united with God or with each other in love. **Agapetos** is used only of Christians as united (by covenant, the New Covenant) with God and/or with each other in love. Agapetos describes "one who is in a very special relationship with another" (BDAG) and in secular Greek is used mostly of a child, especially an only child to whom all the love of his parents is given (cf use by the Father describing His only Son and Abraham describing his "only son" in Ge 22:2). BDAG adds that agapetos " pertains to one who is dearly loved, dear, beloved, prized, valued (papyri, LXX; pseudepigraphia) indicating a close relationship, especially that between parent and child."

## [Stand in Awe](#) by Steven Cole

William Beebe was an explorer and a friend of President Theodore Roosevelt. Often when he visited the President, the two men would go outdoors at night to see who could first locate the Andromeda galaxy. Then as they gazed at the tiny smudge of distant starlight, one of them would recite, "That is the spiral galaxy of Andromeda. It is as large as our Milky Way. It is one of a hundred million galaxies. It is 750,000 light-years away. It consists of one hundred billion suns, each larger than our sun." After that thought had sunk in, Roosevelt would flash his toothy grin and say, "Now I think we're small enough! Let's go to bed." (Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations, by Paul Lee Tan [Assurance Publishers], # 2213.)

We now know that Andromeda is 2.6 million light years away and consists of one trillion stars, about twice the number of our galaxy.

And while the numbers are only estimates and they keep getting larger, astronomers think that there are at least 100-200 billion galaxies, not 100 million. A German supercomputer simulation recently put that number at 500 billion (universetoday.com). Mr. Beebe and President Roosevelt would feel even smaller!

As the apostle Paul sums up Romans 11 in our text, he wants us to feel appropriately small in the presence of the Sovereign God who moves all of history according to His unfathomable ways for His own glory.

Pastor John Piper (desiringGod.org, "God's Design for History: The Glory of His Mercy," italics his) sums up,

"Romans 11:30-32 is the summary of the main point of this chapter, namely, that God has designed and guided history—both its disobedience and its obedience—so that in the end it will most fully display the reliability of his promises and the magnificence of his mercy—to prevent human pride and produce white-hot worship."

Douglas Moo (The Epistle to the Romans [Eerdmans], pp. 729-730) points out that Ro 11:28-32

"recapitulate and wrap up the argument of Ro 9-11 as a whole. Paul's assertion of Israel's dual status in v. 28 succinctly summarizes the dilemma that drives the whole argument of these chapters: the Israel now at enmity with God because of the gospel is nevertheless the Israel to whom God has made irrevocable promises of blessing."

Paul's point is: We should stand in awe of God because He designs and controls all of history to display His faithfulness to His promises and the glory of His mercy to sinners.

Paul has been gazing through the telescope to get a glimpse of just how big God is, and he invites us to take a look for ourselves.

### **1. God designs and controls all of history.**

Some might react to this statement by thinking that it denies our "free will." They would object, "Are we just robots that God has programmed to do what He has determined they should do?" But the biblical view is much more profound than this. While God controls all of history and moves it according to His sovereign purpose, He does so through humans who are free to make choices for which they are held responsible. For example, before human history began God ordained the cross. The cross was necessary because of human sin and it could only be implemented through sinful behavior. And yet at the same time, God is not responsible for sin and He holds sinners accountable for their sin.

In my Bible reading this week, I came to a verse that is a favorite of many, Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope." It's a wonderful promise for God's people, especially those who are suffering. In the verse just before, God tells Jeremiah that after 70 years of captivity in Babylon, He will restore Israel to their land. In the following verses (Jer 29:12-13) He says, "Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart."

Did you notice the interplay between God's sovereignty and human responsibility in those verses? God has a plan for His people and He will carry out that plan right on schedule. He is not restricted from carrying out His plan by what sinful people do. God's plan required that Cyrus the pagan king had to decide to let the Jews return to their land. The Jews had to decide to give up living in Babylon, where they had been born and reared, and to make the difficult, dangerous, and uncertain journey back to Israel. To do that, they had to rely on God's promise that their future in Israel would be for their and their children's good. Furthermore, God declares that the Jews of that future generation will call upon Him, pray to Him, and seek Him with all their hearts.

So God had a plan and it was certain that He would accomplish His plan. The plan included the "free" decision of a sinful king and the "free" decision of the Jews to return to the land and seek the Lord. But when they freely chose these things, they were carrying out God's foreordained plan. And it was not that God merely foresaw these events. Rather, He designs and controls how things turn out to accomplish His purposes. But at the same time, He accomplishes His purpose through people who make real choices for which they are responsible.

John Piper outlines four broad stages of history (Ro 11:30-32):

(1) The time of Gentile disobedience, when God permitted the nations to go their own way. God described some of this history in advance to Abraham in a mind-boggling statement (Gen. 15:13): "God said to Abram, 'Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.'" Then God explains why Israel will spend four centuries in slavery in Egypt (Gen. 15:16), "Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity

of the Amorite is not yet complete.” That’s amazing! Israel would spend four long centuries in slavery because the iniquity of the Amorite (the Canaanites) was not yet complete! When their sin was full to the brim, God freed Israel from slavery to Egypt and commanded them to execute His judgment on the wicked Canaanites.

Paul referred to this time of Gentile disobedience in a passing phrase in a sermon at Lystra (Acts 14:16), “In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways ....” I thought about that verse on Monday as we hiked to a remote spot below the North Rim of the Grand Canyon called “Shaman’s Gallery.” It is an extensive panel of rock art that some native shaman who did not know the living and true God put there perhaps 1,000 years ago. Why didn’t he know God? Because in His unsearchable judgments and unfathomable ways, God permitted the Gentiles to go their own ways.

(2) The time of Jewish disobedience, when they rejected their Messiah and He gave them up to hardness. As we saw last time, Israel brazenly rejected and crucified their Savior as they cried out (Matt. 27:25), “His blood shall be on us and on our children!” Although God had ordained the cross, He permitted the Jews to make that frightening choice and pronounce that curse on them and their children. That hardness has lasted for almost 2,000 years.

When Paul says (Ro 11:28), “From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake,” he means that because God hardened the Jews, the gospel has now gone out to the Gentiles (see Ro 11:11, 12, 15). “Enemies” probably means, “They are God’s enemies” because of their sin and unbelief in rejecting their Messiah. But the staggering thing about God’s judgment on the Jews is that if you had been born as a Jew in the past 2,000 years, unless you were a part of the remnant according to God’s gracious choice (Ro 11:5), you would have lived and died hardened toward the good news about the Savior!

(3) The time of mercy shown to the Gentiles through the spread of the gospel to all nations—the fullness of the Gentiles. We are the recipients of God’s mercy in this period as the gospel goes out to the nations. And yet, as I just mentioned in the case of the Native Americans who lived 1,000 years ago, they lived and died without hearing the gospel. Approximately 6,900 people groups are still in such spiritual darkness, waiting to hear the gospel (see my message “Good News for All,” 1/29/12).

(4) The time of mercy on Israel as God completes his redemptive plan and takes away the hardening and saves the nation of Israel with a mass conversion to Christ. As I explained last week, this will probably happen either just prior to or at the time of the second coming of Jesus Christ. In Ro 11:31, the second “now” is difficult, causing some manuscripts to omit it. But it is probably original. But how can the Jews now be shown mercy when it is still future? Probably Paul meant that now that the Gentiles have been shown mercy, the Jews were in position for this final phase of God’s program. It could take place “now,” at any time.

I need to emphasize that God’s shutting up all in disobedience does not mean that He is responsible for sin. It has the idea of God giving the Gentiles over to the consequences of their sin (as in Rom. 1:24, 26, & 28) and consigning the Jews to judicial hardening because of their sin (Ro 11:7-10). Just as He shut up these two groups to their sins, so He will show mercy to the two groups. But this does not mean that He will save everyone in those groups. Moo explains (*ibid.*, pp. 736-737), “He is saying that God has imprisoned in disobedience first Gentiles and now Jews so that he might bestow mercy on each of these groups of humanity.”

The **Westminster Confession of Faith** (Chapter III, 1.) puts the biblical balance like this:

“God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.”

The point is that without violating the free agency of sinners, God designs and controls all history for His sovereign purpose of glorifying His name. And so we should stand in awe of the Sovereign God of history.

## **2. God designs and controls all of history to display His faithfulness to His promises.**

Romans 11:28-29: “From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” H. C. G. Moule (*The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans* [Cambridge: University Press, 1903], p. 201, italics his) paraphrases,

With a view to the spread of the Gospel, which is the message of salvation for every believer, Jew or Gentile, (Ro 1:16) it pleased God in His sovereign plan to reject the great majority of the Jews—in order to open His kingdom wide to you. But with a view to the believing element, the elect Jews of every age, including the great multitude to be called to grace hereafter, the Jews are still dear to Him; for His Covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is sovereign and unchangeable.

Douglas Moo (ibid., p. 729) says, "It is because God has chosen Israel to be his 'beloved' that he will bring salvation to the people in the last day." He points out that "election" (in Ro 11:28) refers not to salvation for every single Jew, but rather to God's choosing Israel as a nation in line with His covenant with the patriarchs. This status as God's chosen nation results in salvation only for those whom God individually chooses and calls in this age (the "remnant" of Ro 11:5) and in the future ("all Israel" of Ro 11:26).

When Paul says that Israel is "beloved for the sake of the fathers," he does not mean that the godliness of the patriarchs somehow stored up merit for their descendants. Nor did God choose the patriarchs because of something worthy in them. The Bible records that they all had many sins. Rather, Paul means that God will fulfill His promises to the patriarchs.

God's "gifts" (Ro 11:29) refers to the blessings enumerated in Ro 9:4-5. His "calling" refers to God's calling Abram and promising to bless him and his descendants. In other words, it refers to God's choosing Israel as His special people. According to The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology (F. Laubach, [Zondervan, 1975], ed. by Colin Brown, 1:357), "irrevocable" means, "In spite of the disobedience and hardening of men's hearts God will accomplish his purpose of salvation also in his people Israel." In other words, God will not go back on His covenant promises. He has designed history to display His faithfulness to His promises.

The practical benefit of this is that we can trust God's promises, including His promise to work even the most difficult trials together for our ultimate good (Rom. 8:28). But keep in mind that you may die without seeing the fulfillment of God's promises. Abraham died owning only a burial cave that he had bought with his own money, without realizing God's promise to give him the land of Canaan. But God's timing is not our timing. With God, a thousand years is as a day (2 Pet. 3:8), and so it's only been four days since Abraham's time! But when the final account of human history stands finished, we will see that God designed and controlled it all to display the complete faithfulness of His promises. We can count on His Word as true! ([Stand in Awe](#))

**Romans 11:29 for the [gifts](#) and the [calling](#) of [God](#) are [irrevocable](#).**

**Greek:** [ametameleta gar ta charismata kai e klesis tou theou](#).

**Amplified:** For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable. [He never withdraws them when once they are given, and He does not change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call.]

**ESV:** For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

**ICB:** God never changes his mind about the people he calls and the things he gives them.

**NIV:** for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

**NKJV:** For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

**NLT:** For God's gifts and his call can never be withdrawn.

**Phillips:** For once they are made, God does not withdraw his gifts of his calling.

**Wuest:** for the gifts in grace and the calling of God are with respect to a change of mind irrevocable.

**Young's Literal:** for unrepented of are the gifts and the calling of God;

**FOR THE GIFTS AND THE CALLING OF GOD ARE IRREVOCABLE: ametameleta gar ta charismata kai e klesis tou theou**

■ Hosea 13:14

Mal 3:6 (note) "For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

Nu 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"

**GOD IS THE ULTIMATE  
PROMISE KEEPER!**

**For - Always pause and ponder this important term of explanation.**



In this verse **for** which explains why they are still beloved of God. The answer is of course that God does not take back His gifts. Once He has made an unconditional promise, He never goes back on it. He gave Israel the special privileges as we studied in Romans 9:4, 5. He called Israel to be His earthly people, separate from the rest of the nations. Nothing can change His purposes.

**Gifts (5486)** (**charisma** from **charis** = grace + the ending **--ma** which indicates the result of something, in this case the result of grace) means "gift of grace" or "free gift".

**Calling (2821)** (**klesis**) (**Click** in depth study) means a call and was used for an invitation to a banquet. In the NT the word is used metaphorically of the call or invitation to come into the kingdom of God with all its privileges. In the present context "**klesis**" refers to the divine call by which elect Jews are introduced into the privileges of the gospel. God's invitation (**klesis**) to man to accept the benefits of His salvation is what this calling is all about.

**Louw Nida** defines **klesis** as an "urgent invitation to someone to accept responsibilities for a particular task, implying a new relationship to the one who does the calling; the station in life or social role which one has."

**Vine** defines **klesis** as "a calling, is always used in NT of that calling the origin, nature and destiny of which are heavenly (the idea of invitation being implied); it is used especially of God's invitation to man to accept the benefits of salvation."

**Irrevocable (278)** (**ametameletos** from **a** = without + **metamélomai** = change one's mind; regret) means not feeling regret as result of what one has done. The idea is not feeling regret as result of what one has done not regretful, not feeling sorry about. It means that God will not change His mind about what He has promised Israel through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

God's gifts and callings are ametameletos or "incapable of being changed, not to be taken back, inflexible" and in 2Cor 7:10 ametameletos speaks "of the beneficial results of repentance with nothing to feel sorry about, leaving no feeling of regret." (Friberg)

**BDAG** says in the passive sense **ametameletos** means "not to be regretted, without regret" and the active sense it means "feeling no remorse, having no regret."

This word is first in the Greek placing emphasis on this truth. Literally "irrevocable (are) the gifts and calling of God."

**Irrevocable** in English = Not possible to revoke; Unalterable. Webster's 1828 adds "Not to be recalled or revoked; that cannot be reversed, repealed or annulled; as an irrevocable decree, sentence, edict or doom; irrevocable fate; an irrevocable promise."

The **KJV** says "not to be repented of" which is very inadequate. It would have been better translated "without regret". What the apostle is saying here is that when God has given gifts to men and has extended His salvation to them, He never regrets the extension of His grace or changes His mind as having made a mistake because of the behavior of the ones that He saved and gifted. Salvation should never be considered as merely man's decision to follow Christ, but also God's acceptance of the genuineness of that decision and the birth and existence of faith.

The only other NT use is by Paul (no uses in the Septuagint)...

2Cor 7:10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance **without regret**, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

**Comment:** Here ametameletos is used as a verbal adjective connected with repentance. Metanoia is true repentance, changing of one's mind and asking God to change his heart that he may sin no more. Metaméleia, the noun derived from metaméllomai (3338), means to regret the results of one's decision and action. A thief may regret having stolen because he was caught and punished. However, if the thief is convicted in his heart that stealing is wrong and sinful, he will repent of his sin, not because he was caught, but because of his conviction that sin is contrary to God's will and his own good. Thus he is contrite and asks God to take away the guilt of his sin and to make him a righteous person, one who hates stealing and all other sin. What Paul is therefore speaking about here is unregrettable repentance. No one would regret his repentance because of the consequence of that repentance which is salvation. It is not to be regretted because it has led unto salvation (Nu 23:19; 1Sa 15:29).

When God calls it is an **effectual call** and when He gives you a gift it can never be taken back or annulled. The Sovereign God guarantees these things to the elect.

**John MacArthur** - God's sovereign election of Israel, like that of individual believers, is unconditional and unchangeable, because it is rooted in His immutable nature and expressed in the unilateral, eternal Abrahamic Covenant (MacArthur Study Bible Nashville: Word Pub)

**Moses** testifies that...

"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? ([Numbers 23:19](#)) (See related topic: **Truth**)

In **Malachi** God testifies...

"For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed" ([Malachi 3:6](#)) (See related topic: **Immutable**)

In **Isaiah** God says...

Shall I bring to the point of birth, and not give delivery?" says the LORD. "Or shall I who gives delivery shut the womb?" says your God (Isaiah 66:9)

### [UNCHANGING GOD. — HEAR FROM ETERNAL HEAV'N](#)

by Samuel J. Stone

Unchanging God, hear from eternal Heav'n:  
We plead Thy gifts of grace, forever given,  
Thy call, without repentance, calling still,  
The sure election of Thy sovereign will.

Out of our faith in Thee, Who canst not lie,  
Out of our heart's desire, goes up our cry,  
From hope's sweet vision of the thing to be,  
From love to those who still are loved by Thee.

Bring Thy beloved back, Thine Israel,  
Thine own elect who from Thy favor fell,  
But not from Thine election! O forgive,  
Speak but the word, and lo! the dead shall live.

Father of mercies! these the long astray,  
These in soul blindness now the far away,  
These are not aliens, but Thy sons of yore,  
Oh, by Thy Fatherhood, restore, restore!

Triune Jehovah, Thine the grace and power,  
Thine all the work, its past, its future hour,  
O Thou, Who failest not, Thy gifts fulfill,  
And crown the calling of Thy changeless will.

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### **Related resources...**

- [Summary on the Attributes of God](#)
- [Spurgeon on the Attributes of God](#)
- [Israel of God - Is God "Finished" with Israel in His prophetic plan?](#)
- [Table Comparing/contrasting Israel & Church](#)
- [Does the Church Fulfill Israel's Program? - John Walvoord](#)
- [The Jewish People, Jesus Christ and World History - S Lewis Johnson](#)
- [Eschatological Problems IX- Israel's Restoration - John Walvoord](#)
- [Will Israel Build a Temple in Jerusalem- Walvoord](#)
- [Eschatological Problems V - Is the Church the Israel of God- Walvoord](#)
- [Eschatological Problems VI- The Fulfillment Of The Abrahamic Covenant - Walvoord](#)
- [Eschatological Problems IX- Israel's Restoration - Walvoord](#)
- [Eschatological Problems X- The New Covenant with Israel - Walvoord](#)
- [Israel And The Nations - John Walvoord](#)
- [Does the Church Fulfill Israel's Program- — Part 1 - Walvoord](#)
- [Does the Church Fulfill Israel's Program- — Part 2 - Walvoord](#)
- [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)!

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## QUESTION - [What does it mean that the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable](#)

**ANSWER** - As Paul states in Romans 11:29, **"the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable"** or **"without repentance"** (KJV). **"Gifts"** are those things that are freely or graciously given—think of the Christmas gifts you may have been given as a child. **"Callings"** are those things someone has summoned or invited another to do. In this instance, the gifts and callings come from God—God is the Giver of the gifts and the Initiator of the callings. These particular **gifts and callings** "can never be withdrawn" (NLT).

In the immediate context of Romans 11:29, Paul is discussing the place of Israel in God's plan. Romans 1—8 discusses the condemnation, justification, sanctification, and future glorification of all the world. He concludes chapter 8 with a wonderful statement of the surety of all these things, particularly the security of the believer in Christ regarding [eternal life](#). The following questions then arise: **"Didn't God make promises to Israel? Are those promises going to be kept?"** Paul answers in Romans 9—11.

Prior to the statement, “**The gifts and callings of God are without irrevocable**” in Romans 11:29, Paul says that “Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the [full number of the Gentiles](#) has come in” (Romans 11:25). When all the Gentiles who will be saved receive salvation, Israel will return to God and [be saved](#) (Ro 11:26). Paul then concludes that, from the viewpoint of the Gentile, the Israelites are enemies, but, from the viewpoint of God, they are His beloved (Ro 11:28). God will not renege on His promises to Israel, because **the gifts and callings of God** are without repentance (Ro 11:29).

The history and future of Israel are foundational for understanding Romans 11:29. In Genesis 12, God makes a [seven-part promise](#) to Abraham. The first part of this promise is, “I will make you into a great nation” (Genesis 12:2). Abraham follows the command of God and leaves his homeland. God fulfills His promise by making the descendants of Abraham a great nation—Israel. God calls Abraham to be the father of this nation. This calling is irrevocable. Throughout the Old Testament, God makes many promises to Israel, including an eternal kingdom (2 Samuel 7:12–13), fellowship with Him (Jeremiah 31:31–34), and much more.

Paul was sure that God had plans for Israel. The people had hardened their hearts against God, but God’s **gifts and callings** are without repentance. God did not regret those **gifts and callings** and would not revoke them. Even to this day, God has not fulfilled all the gifts, callings, and promises given to Israel, but we can be certain, as Paul was, that He will.

God’s **gifts and callings** to the believer in Christ are also irrevocable. For example, “the free gift of God is eternal life” (Romans 6:23). This gift is given to those who believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8–9); namely, His death and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). That gift is truly eternal, [secure](#), and irrevocable. ([Gotquestions.org](#))

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#### **QUESTION - [Has the church been grafted in Israel's place?](#)**

In Romans 11:11–24 Paul compares Israel to the natural branches of a cultivated olive tree and the Gentile believers to the branches of a wild olive tree. Some of the natural branches (Israel) were broken off, and the wild branches (Gentiles) were grafted in (verse 17). The Gentiles, then, have been made partakers of the promises and inherit the blessings of God’s salvation.

It is important to understand how God called Israel to be His people and how they failed to fulfill that calling. As the seed of Abraham, the children of Israel were chosen by God to be a separate people, holy to the Lord. God’s design was for them to be a light to the Gentiles so that they, too, might know God (Genesis 18:17–19; Isaiah 42, 49). Instead, the Israelites chased foreign gods and betrayed their calling (Ezekiel 23; Hosea 11). But God, who knew they would do this, had already promised to restore His kingdom to Israel after they rebelled and then eventually repented (Deuteronomy 30:1–10). So God sent His Son, preceded by a forerunner, to invite Israel to “repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2; 4:17).

However, when Jesus revealed Himself as the promised Davidic King who would restore Israel (Matthew 11–12; Acts 3:19–22), He was rejected by the Jews, exactly as Isaiah had prophesied (Isaiah 52–53). Jesus therefore called His disciples to fulfill Abraham’s commission to bless the nations (Genesis 12:2–3) by preaching the gospel of the Kingdom to all nations until the end of this age (Matthew 28:18–20). Paul thus preached the gospel of the Kingdom to the Jews and was repeatedly rejected (Acts 13–28); in consequence, Paul brought the good news to the Gentiles, who in turn became Abraham’s *spiritual* seed by faith and heirs of the promises to Abraham and his seed (Galatians 3–4). This is what Paul meant in Romans 11 by the Gentiles being “grafted” into the “olive tree” and nourished by the “root” (the promises to Abraham). The tree thus signifies the collective people of God; the “wild branches” grafted in are Gentile believers; the “natural branches” that are cut off are the Jews in unbelief. Jewish believers remain in the tree but are joined with Gentiles and “made” into a “new body,” the Church (Ephesians 2:11–22).

Paul anticipated a question that would surely arise among his Gentile readers: “I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall?” ([Romans 11:1](#))—Gentile believers would be tempted to dismiss Israel because it appeared they would never recover. **Even today, there are those who advocate supersessionism or [replacement theology](#), which holds that the Church has completely replaced Israel and will inherit the promises to be fulfilled only in a *spiritual* sense. In other words, according to this view, ethnic Israel is forever excluded from the promises—the Jews will not literally inherit the Promised Land.** What then would happen to Israel? What about the Old Testament prophecies that Israel as a nation would repent and be re-gathered to the land in the last days as a permanent possession (Deuteronomy 30:1–10)?

**Romans 11 thus conclusively shows Gentile believers that God is not yet “done” with Israel, who has only temporarily lost the privilege of representing God as His people.** Since “the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable” (11:29), “all Israel will be saved” in order to fulfill God’s covenant with ethnic Israel (11:25–28), including the promise of land inheritance (Deuteronomy 30:1–10).

While some of the “natural branches” were cut off because Israel failed, God’s purposes are not complete until Israel is also grafted back into the people of God to share in the promises to Abraham and his seed. This brings full circle God’s larger redemptive plan (Romans 11:30–36) for both Jews and Gentiles as distinct populations within the people of God in the Davidic (or Millennial)

Kingdom. Indeed, the prophets saw this [Kingdom](#) as the “final form” of the olive tree, so that Israel—reversing roles—would then bless the Gentiles, enabling them to join the people of God (see Zechariah 8:13, 20–23).

**Romans 11:30** For [just](#) as you [once](#) were [disobedient](#) to [God](#), but [now](#) have been [shown mercy](#) because of their [disobedience](#),

**Greek:** [hosper gar humeis pote epeithesate \(2PAAI\) to theo nun de eleethete \(2PAPI\) te touton apeitheia](#)

**Amplified:** Just as you were once disobedient and rebellious toward God but now have obtained [His] mercy, through their disobedience,

**ESV:** Just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience,

**ICB:** At one time you refused to obey God. But now you have received mercy, because those people refused to obey.

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

**NKJV:** For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience,

**NLT:** Once, you Gentiles were rebels against God, but when the Jews refused his mercy, God was merciful to you instead.

**Phillips:** Just as in the past you were disobedient to God but have found that mercy which might have been theirs but for their disobedience,

**Wuest:** For, even as you formerly disbelieved God, yet now have been made recipients of mercy through the occasion of the unbelief of these,

**Young's Literal:** for as ye also once did not believe in God, and now did find kindness by the unbelief of these:

**FOR JUST AS YOU (Gentiles) ONCE WERE DISOBEDIENT TO GOD: [hosper gar humeis pote epeithesate \(2PAAI\) to theo](#)**

- 1Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 2:1,2,12,13,19-21; Colossians 3:7; Titus 3:3-7) (Ro 11:31; 1Corinthians 7:25; 2 Corinthians 4:1; 1Timothy 1:18; 1Peter 2:10

**Barclay** - Paul is coming to the end of his argument. He has faced a bewildering, and, for a Jew, a heartbreaking situation. Somehow he has had to find an explanation of the fact that God's people rejected his Son when he came into the world. Paul never shut his eyes to that tragic fact, but he found a way in which the whole tragic situation could be fitted into the plan of God. It is true that the Jews rejected Christ; but, as Paul saw it, that rejection happened in order that Christ might be offered to the Gentiles. To maintain the sovereignty of God's purpose, Paul even went the length of saying that it was he himself who hardened the hearts of the Jews in order to open a way to the Gentiles; but, even then, however contradictory it might sound, he still insisted on the personal responsibility of the Jews for their failure to accept God's offer. Paul held fast at one and the same time to divine sovereignty and human responsibility. But now comes the note of hope. His argument is a little complicated... ([Romans 11 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

**For** - Always **pause** and **ponder** this important **term of explanation**.

**Disobedient** ([544](#))(**apeitheo** from **a** = without + **peitho** = persuade) literally describes one who refuses to be persuaded and who disbelieves willfully and perversely. Apeitheo in the present context means that these individuals possessed an attitude of unbelief because they deliberately choose to disobey, to consciously resist and rebel against authority and finally manifest an obstinate rejection of the will (truth) of God. **Do we not all do this at the moment we commit willful sin?**

**Once** - **Denney** sees this as a reference to "in the past, Ro 1:18-32." ([Romans 11 - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

**Newell** - Our Gentile history is summed up in the words "**disobedient to God**"; our present position in the words: "**now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience**"; and now Israel nationally have been more disobedient even than the Gentiles (**Ed**:

as alluded to in Ro 11:31 "**so these also now have been disobedient!**): disobedient to God's Law, to His warning prophets, to His own dear Son, their Messiah, whom they crucified; to the witness of the Spirit through Stephen and the apostles of the resurrection of the Messiah. But at last they will "**be shown mercy** (Ro 11:31)," a new principle for them! Having proved utterly disobedient, having lost all claim on God, they will at last be met by God on the same great principle of mercy, and mercy alone (**Ed**: Ro 11:31 = "**because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy**"). So that in the future age, the Millennium, and on forever, this nation will carry in its heart the two great principles that give God all the glory: First, that they were beloved of Jehovah, who had set His love upon them, the only reason being in Himself. "Because Jehovah loveth you, and because He would keep the oath which He sware unto your fathers" (Deut 7:7,8). Second, the consciousness of their own complete failure: of a history of ingratitude, rebellion, wickedness, idolatry, refusal of instruction and correction, and finally, of despising and rejecting their own Messiah (2Chr 36:14-16; Ps 106:1ff). They will be brokenly conscious forever of being the objects of the absolute uncaused mercy of Jehovah their God! Thus they will be able to trust and rejoice in Jehovah, as the true Church-saint now trusts and rejoices and glories in God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who associated us with His own Son in the same sovereign mercy! **It must be carefully marked and deeply pondered, this great account of sovereign mercy**, - mercy first to us (Gentiles), and by and by to Israel, - "**the MERCIES of God**," by means of which God will win our hearts, "beseeching us" by His apostle, to present our bodies a living sacrifice to Him (Ro 12:1). It is not only that God has dealt with us in grace, -unearned favor; but that He has shown mercy when all was hopeless! **We may venture to say that it is only in those who learn to regard themselves as the objects of the Divine mercy, of uncaused Divine compassion, that the deepest foundations for godliness of life will be, or can be, laid** (Ed: Read the story of the woman "a sinner" in Luke 7:40-50 which seems to support Newell's premise. Note association of love and obedience in Jn 14:15). ([Romans 11 - Newell's Commentary](#))

**BUT NOW HAVE BEEN SHOWN MERCY BECAUSE OF THEIR (the Jew's) DISOBEDIENCE: nun de eleethete (2PAPI) te touton apeitheia:**

**But now** - This is the great Divine Reversal!

**But now** - 77x in Scripture (not all a divine reversal but a number are, especially those in the NT!) -

Gen 30:30; Ex 32:32; Num 11:6; 14:17; Josh 9:12; Jdg 6:13; 20:9; 1 Sam 2:30; 12:10; 13:14; 26:11; 2 Sam 12:23; 13:20; 19:9; 24:10; 1 Kgs 5:4; 2 Kgs 1:14; 3:15; 13:19; 1 Chr 21:8; Ezra 9:8; Neh 6:9; Job 4:5; 12:7; 16:7; 30:1; 42:5; Ps 119:67; Isa 1:21; 16:14; 43:1; 44:1; 64:8; Jer 2:18; 37:20; 40:4; Hag 2:4, 15; Zech 8:11; Mal 1:9;

**NEW TESTAMENT USES:**

Luke 16:25; 19:42; 22:36; John 15:22, 24; 16:5; 17:13; Rom 3:21; 6:22; 7:6; 11:30; 15:23, 25; 16:26; 1 Cor 7:14; 12:18, 20; 13:13; 14:6; 15:20; 2 Cor 8:11, 22; Gal 3:25; 4:9; Eph 2:13; 5:8; Phil 2:12; Col 3:8; 1 Thess 3:6; 2 Tim 1:10; Philemon 1:11; Heb 2:8; 8:6; 9:26; 12:26; 1 Pet 2:10, 25

## **MERCY TO THOSE WHO DO NOT DESERVE IT!**

**Have been shown mercy** (1653)(*eleeo* from *eleos*) Passive voice (**divine passive**) = mercy derives from a source outside of them (i.e., God). See next verse.

**Disobedience** (543) (*apeitheia* from *a* = without + *peitho* = persuade) - see Ro 11:32 below.

**Denney** - The past unbelief of the Gentiles (**just as you were once disobedient to God**) and the mercy they presently enjoy (**but now have been shown mercy**), the present unbelief ("**their disobedience**" - cp Ro 11:11, 15, 31) of the Jews and the mercy they are destined to enjoy in the future (**they also may now be shown mercy** - Ro 11:31)—these things not only correspond to each other, but they are interwoven with each other; they are parts of a system which God controls, and in which every element conditions and is conditioned by all the rest: there is a Divine necessity pervading and controlling all the freedom of men—a Divine purpose mastering all the random activity of human wills; a purpose which is read out by the Apostle in Romans 11:32 : God shut them all up into disobedience that He might have mercy upon them all. ([Romans 11 - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

**MacDonald** - The Gentiles were once an untamed, disobedient people, but when Israel spurned the Messiah and the gospel of salvation, God turned to the Gentiles in mercy. (MacDonald, W., & Farstad, A. . Believer's Bible Commentary. Nashville: Thomas Nelson)

**Steven Cole - God designs and controls all of history to display the glory of His mercy to sinners.** Romans 11:30-32: "For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all."

By repetition Paul sets forth two themes: "Disobedient" (or, "disobedience") occurs four times. "Mercy" also occurs four times. John Murray (The Epistle to the Romans [Eerdmans], 2:102, italics his) observes, "It is only in the context of disobedience that mercy has relevance and meaning." Unless you realize the enormity of your own disobedience and sin, you will not appreciate the greatness of the gift of God's mercy.

In this sweeping summary of history there is a similarity and a difference (Leon Morris, The Epistle to the Romans [Apollos/Eerdmans], p. 425). Both the Jews and the Gentiles are alike in that both groups were disobedient to God. But the difference is that in God's design for history, through the Jews' disobedience, the Gentiles came to experience God's mercy, but it will be through the Gentiles' experience of God's mercy that the Jews will finally come to know His mercy, too.

Morris (ibid., pp. 424-425) also points out that it is significant that Paul does not say, "You were disobedient, but you have become obedient," but rather, "You have been shown mercy." He adds, "It is no human achievement of which he speaks, but a divine gift." God's mercy is similar to His grace, in that both represent His unmerited favor toward those who deserve His judgment. But the nuance of difference is that grace emphasizes God's favor in forgiving our sins because we are guilty, whereas mercy emphasizes His compassion on us because we are miserable (R. C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament [Eerdmans], p. 170). ([Stand in Awe](#))

**Romans 11:31** [so these also now](#) have been [disobedient](#), that because of the [mercy](#) shown to you they [also](#) may [now](#) be [shown mercy](#).

**Greek:** [houtos kai houtoi nun epeithesan \(3PAAI\)](#) [to humetero eleei hina kai autoi \[nun\] eleethosin; \(3PAPS\)](#)

**Amplified:** So they also now are being disobedient [when you are receiving mercy], that they in turn may one day, through the mercy you are enjoying, also receive mercy [that they may share the mercy which has been shown to you--through you as messengers of the Gospel to them].

**ESV:** so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now[4] receive mercy.

**ICB:** And now the Jews refuse to obey, because God showed mercy to you. But this happened so that they also can receive mercy from God.

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

**NKJV:** even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.

**NLT:** And now, in the same way, the Jews are the rebels, and God's mercy has come to you. But someday they, too, will share in God's mercy.

**Phillips:** so they, who at the present moment are disobedient, will eventually share the mercy which has been extended to you.

**Wuest:** thus also these now have disbelieved in order that through the occasion of the mercy which is yours, they themselves also might now become the recipients of mercy,

**Young's Literal:** so also these now did not believe, that in your kindness they also may find kindness;

**SO THESE (Jews) ALSO NOW HAVE BEEN DISOBEDIENT:** [houtos kai houtoi nun epeithesan \(3PAAI\)](#):

- Ro 10:16; 11:15,25

**MERCY TO THE JEWS**

## THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL

In every generation, Jehovah has a **believing remnant of Jews** in the nation of Israel, even though many (most) of the nation is unfaithful, rebellious and/or stiff-necked. God has not forgotten His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God has not replaced the nation of Israel with the Church. The specific promises given to Israel are still valid and will be fulfilled, every jot and tittle!

### Related Resources:

- [What is replacement theology / supersessionism?](#)
- [Israel of God](#)

**International Children's Bible** - "And now the Jews refuse to obey, because God showed mercy to you. But this happened so that they also can receive mercy from God."

**Wuest:** thus also these (Jews) now have disbelieved in order that through the occasion of the mercy which is yours (Gentiles), they (Jews) themselves also might now become the recipients of mercy,

**So these** - The Jews.

**Disobedient** (544) (**apeitheo** from **a** = without + **peitho** = persuade) means literally not to allow one's self to be persuaded. It describes one who refuses to be persuaded and instead willfully and perversely disbelieves. It conveys an attitude of unbelief and involves deliberate disobedience or conscious resistance to authority. Men, Jews or Gentiles, do not avoid Christ because of insufficient facts but because of proud and unrepentant hearts. **Wuest** adds this word "speaks of a stubborn, stiff-necked attitude."

**Moule** - The "mercy of the Gentiles" is the mercy of God in Christ to them, not any mercy of theirs to the Jews.—The statement of this verse is the almost exact converse of that of Romans 11:30. Jewish unbelief was, in a certain sense, the instrumental cause of Gentile salvation; so, in a certain sense, Gentile salvation was the final cause of Jewish unbelief. In the Divine Plan the call of the Gentiles was to hinge upon the unbelief of the Jews when they should reject Messiah; and thus the grand act of Jewish unbelief was, in a guarded sense, "caused" by the promise of the call of the Gentiles. ([Romans 11 Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#))

**Hodge** - Even so have these (the Jews) now not believed (or, 'now been disobedient'), that through your mercy (the mercy shown to you Gentiles) they also may obtain mercy. Here is an entirely new idea. The apostle has hitherto dwelt upon the unbelief of the Jews as making way for the faith of the Gentiles—the exclusion of the one occasioning the reception of the other; a truth which could yield to generous, believing Gentiles but mingled satisfaction. Now, opening a more cheering prospect, he speaks of the mercy shown to the Gentiles as a means of Israel's recovery, which seems to mean that it will be by the instrumentality of believing Gentiles that Israel as a nation is at length to "look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn for Him," (Zech 12:10) and so to "obtain mercy." (See 2Corinthians 3:15-16.) ([Romans 11 - Bible Commentary](#))

**IN ORDER THAT BECAUSE OF THE MERCY SHOWN TO YOU THEY ALSO MAY NOW BE SHOWN MERCY: to humetero eleei hina kai autoi (nun) eleethosin (3PAPS):**

## A VERY IMPORTANT PURPOSE CLAUSE

**In order that** - This identifies this passage as a purpose statement. See [terms of purpose](#).

Israel's disobedience will be followed by mercy, when they (the Jews) are provoked to jealousy through the mercy shown to the Gentiles. **William Newell** on the other hand does not interpret this passage (**in order that because...**) as referring to future Jewish jealousy, commenting that "God brings in the principle upon which He will bless Israel when He makes His New Covenant with them at Christ's Second Coming. It seems that we Gentiles are to be to Israel an example of Divine mercy, by which at last they will understandingly see the "heart of mercy" of their God! (Luke 1:78)."

**Mercy shown to you** - The Gentiles

**They also may now be shown mercy** - The Jews.

**Mercy** (1656)(**eleos**) is the outward manifestation of pity and assumes need on the part of those who are recipients of the mercy and sufficient resources to meet the need on the part of those who show it. The idea of mercy is to show kindness or concern for



someone in serious need or to give help to the wretched, to relieve the miserable. Here the essential thought is that mercy gives attention to those in misery.

**Vincent** writes that **eleos** "emphasizes the misery with which grace deals; hence, peculiarly the sense of human wretchedness coupled with the impulse to relieve it, which issues in gracious ministry. Bengel remarks, "Grace takes away the fault, mercy the misery."

**Shown mercy** (1653)(**eleeo** from **eleos** [word study]) means "to feel sympathy with the misery of another, especially such sympathy which manifests itself in action, less frequently in word." Describes the general sense of one who has compassion or person on someone in need. It indicates being moved to pity and compassion by tragedy and includes the fear that this could happen to me. To see someone in dire need (including one who may not deserve the misfortune), to have compassion on them, and to give help to remove the need.

**Romans 11:32** For **God** has **shut up all** in **disobedience so** that He may **show mercy to all**.

**Greek:** [sunekleisen](#) (3SAAI) [gar o theos tous pantas eis apeitheian hina tous pantas eleese](#). (3SAAS)

**Amplified:** For God has consigned (penned up) all men to disobedience, only that He may have mercy on them all [alike].

**ESV:** For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

**ICB:** All people have refused to obey God. God has given them all over to their stubborn ways, so that God can show mercy to all.

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

**NKJV:** For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

**NLT:** For God has imprisoned all people in their own disobedience so he could have mercy on everyone.

**Phillips:** God has all men penned together in the prison of disobedience, that he may have mercy upon them all.

**Wuest:** for God included all within the state of unbelief in order that He might have mercy upon all.

**Young's Literal:** for God did shut up together the whole to unbelief, that to the whole He might do kindness.

**FOR GOD HAS SHUT UP ALL IN DISOBEDIENCE: sunekleisen (3SAAI) gar o theos tous pantas eis apeitheian:**

- Ro 3:9,22

**For** - is a **term of explanation**. Consider the "**5P's**" - **Pause** to **Ponder** the **Passage** then **Practice** it in the **Power** of the Spirit

**Shut up** (4788) (**sugkleio** from **sun** = with + **kleio** = shut, close) means to shut together with, to shut in on all sides, or to close up together. **Sugkleio** was used to describe enclosing of fish in a net in (as in Lk 5:6). All mankind is like those entrapped fish for all are caught in God's net which demands perfect righteousness. This truth is similar to Paul's statement in Galatians regarding the effect of the Scripture (Law) (Gal 3:22-23, see study of **Galatians 3**).

But the Scripture has **shut up** all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe (Galatians 3:22)

The picture also reminds one of (Romans 3:9-10-note) where "**all**" (both Jews & Gentiles) are backed into a corner and shown their totally inadequacy for holiness and righteousness before a holy God, Paul recording "What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE."

**All** (**pas**) signifies no exceptions (cf Ro 5:12-note).

**Disobedience** (543) (**apeitheia** from **a** = without + **peitho** = persuade) describes an unwillingness to be persuaded. It is a willful unbelief (so not ignorance but obstinacy!). It is interesting that **apeitheo** is a stronger term than syn. **apistia** (570), disbelief, unbelief, faithlessness or distrust.

## THAT HE MIGHT SHOW MERCY TO ALL: hina tous pantas eleese (3SAAS):

**That** - In order that. God's purpose is expressed. He is a merciful God, a "mercy filled" God! And for that every redeemed Jew and Gentile says "Thank You God!"

**Mercy to all** - Paul is not saying **all** will be saved. Paul is not teaching the heresy of "universalism." One interpretation is that Paul is teaching that God's infinite mercies are available to **all** who would seek them from Him (but see Steven Cole's interpretation below). Yes, most of mankind will reject God's **mercy** in the process of fitting or preparing themselves for destruction (Ro 9:22, cp Ro 9:17-18) and they are without excuse.

**John MacArthur** - Man's sin, manifested in his willful **disobedience**, provides a means for God to demonstrate the magnitude and graciousness of His **mercy**. Were there no **disobedience**, there would be no need for and there could be no expression of God's **mercy**. To reveal Himself as merciful, He permitted sin. **He has shut up all**—the whole world, Jew and Gentile—in disobedience and unbelief in order that He **might show mercy to all** who repent of their sin and turn to Him for gracious salvation. By His nature, God is a Savior, as seen in Paul's uses of the phrase "God and Savior" in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. He could not display that feature of His person without allowing for sin and hell. In His sovereign omnipotence, God has allowed man intellectually, morally, and spiritually to fall into a state of sin to the extent that, on his own, he is unable to be convinced of God's truth, specifically the truth that he is lost and condemned and that he is powerless in himself to change his condition. God allowed man to fall into sin in order that his only hope would be divine **mercy**. It must be noted that this saving mercy is shown **to all**. The perfect, satisfactory work of Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection has met the demands of the justice and holiness of God, and thereby has removed every barrier to forgiveness for **all**, and any person who seeks forgiveness and salvation will receive it. As John Brown observed, God's revelation of mercy in the gospels refers to men as sinners, not as *elect* sinners. (Romans. Chicago: Moody Press)

**MacDonald** explains that "When we first read this verse, we might get the idea that God arbitrarily condemned both Jews and Gentiles to unbelief, and that there was nothing they could do about it. But that is not the thought. The unbelief was their own doing. What the verse is saying is this: having found both Jews and Gentiles disobedient, God is pictured as imprisoning them both in that condition, so that there would be no way out for them except on His terms. This disobedience provided scope for God to have mercy on all, both Jews and Gentiles. There is no suggestion here of universal salvation. God has shown mercy to the Gentiles and will yet show mercy to the Jews also, but this does not insure the salvation of everyone. Here it is mercy shown along national lines. George Williams says: God having tested both the Hebrew and the Gentile nations, and both having broken down under the test, He shut them up in unbelief so that, being manifestly without merit, and having by demonstration forfeited all claims and all rights to divine favor, He might, in the unsearchable riches of His grace, have mercy upon them all. (Believer's Bible Commentary. Nashville: Thomas Nelson)

Do you recall **Paul's** declaration in Romans 9:6 "But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel (note)."

God had been trying to reach the Jews but for the most part they rejected His Son, the Messiah. Does that mean that God has failed? In this present section of Romans 11, the answer is a categorical "No, God has not failed." Quite to the contrary, He has used Israel's rejection of the Messiah as a means to reach the Gentile world, which He had intended to reach all along. After having shown mercy to the Gentiles, God now uses the very same mercies He has shown to the Gentiles to make the Jews jealous and aware of their rebellion against His Son that they, too, might receive mercy. What keeps anyone from receiving mercy from God? It is a self-righteous, self-confident attitude. "I don't need help. I can handle it myself. I am able to handle all the problems of life on my own. I don't need God." Any individual or nation with that attitude has cut himself off from receiving the mercy of God. So God "*has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.*"

**Steven Cole** - To repeat so that you are clear, Paul is not saying (in Ro 11:32) that God will save everyone. Rather, in the context Paul is looking at the broad sweep of history and God's dealings with the Gentiles and the Jews as groups. He is saying that just as both groups were at various times cut off from God's mercy because of their disobedience, so both groups will experience His mercy as history unfolds. This does not imply that every individual in each group will be saved, which would contradict what Paul says elsewhere, that some will come under eternal condemnation (2Thes 1:9; 2:12). So "**mercy to all**" means that just as God is now pouring out His mercy on the Gentiles as a group, so in the future He will pour out His mercy on the Jews as a group. He has designed and He controls all of history to display the glory of His mercy to sinners. ([Stand in Awe](#))

**Ray Stedman** gives us "an outstanding illustration of this in the fact that... two prominent national figures have remained etched in the public mind as an aftermath of **Watergate: Richard Nixon** and **Charles Colson**". **Stedman** writes that "**Charles Colson** came

to the place where he saw his own rebellion and disobedience to God. He finally came to a place where he was driven to his knees, where he saw that without recognizing it or knowing it, he had been involved in evil things. He began to recognize the extent of it and the control it had in his life. At last he was driven to the place where he openly committed himself to the mercy of God. God changed him. In his book [Born Again](#) he tells how God changed him, healed him, delivered him from prison, and sent him out again to have a new life. He is traveling across the country now, telling his story, involved deeply in a great and helpful ministry to prisoners. He is alive (Ed note: Obviously this was written prior to his death on April 22, 1994) and enjoying life to the full. **Richard Nixon**, on the other hand, has isolated himself in a self-imposed exile in which he refuses to admit he has ever done anything wrong. Tormented with the past, he has become a national pariah, and his life is limited and narrow, crabbed, because he does not yet know of the **mercy of God** that is available to one who admits disobedience. That is the way God works in history. He is constantly moving in many ways in our individual lives to bring us to an awareness of our self-righteousness and dependence on ourselves. Paul says the Jewish nation has not availed themselves of the righteousness of God. Because they are so determined to establish their own righteousness, they cannot accept the righteousness that comes by faith. That is their problem. ([Our Great and Glorious God - Romans 11:25 - 12-1](#))