

26. ROMANS SERIES: God's Plan of Salvation - Part 6

Romans 11:11-36

Far from predicting a mass national conversion and restoration of the Jews into the spiritual Israel of God before the last day, this passage portrays the continuing pattern of God's salvation to individuals throughout the history of the world. It gives us the 'blueprint' of God's plan of salvation.

In the preceding section Paul has reminded us, by quoting Psalm 69 (11:9,10; 9:33), of Israel's unbelief and rejection of the gospel. Here Paul shows the result of Israel's unbelief, that being the inclusion of the elect Gentiles into the Israel of God, thereby arousing to jealousy the remaining elect Jewish remnant that they too might be included within the Israel of God by faith. All the elect are to be saved from unbelief by the grace and mercy of God through faith in Jesus Christ. How amazing and wonderful is the salvation of God!

Please Read Romans 11:11-36

Verse 11: What was God's purpose in the stumbling and falling away of the majority of physical Israel? Was it the final condemnation and doom of all the Jews? Certainly not! Rather, it was through the unbelief of the Jews that the gospel was to be brought to the Gentiles, thereby opening the way for their inclusion into the Israel of God by faith (Acts 13:44-48; 18:6; 28:23-28).

However the inclusion of Gentiles into the spiritual Israel of God was not the only purpose of God in this. Through this God also purposed to provoke the elect Jews to jealousy, that they might also want what the elect Gentiles had found by faith in Christ. By the inclusion of the elect Gentiles then, spiritual blessing would also come to the elect Jews, for they would also seek after the same blessing that the elect Gentiles had received through faith in Christ (Deut 32:21; Rom 10:19; 9:6).

Verse 12: The rejection of the gospel by the Jews has meant great blessings to the world at large, for this has meant the inclusion of Gentiles into the Israel of God. Yet if this is so through their fall, how much more of a blessing will be the inclusion of the full number of

elect Jews to be saved into the Israel of God for the world (9:6)? It must be noted that Paul is not speaking of the entire physical nation of Israel here, but of the whole remnant of physical Israel that is the election of grace (11:1-7,14,25,30,31) from within that nation.

Verses 13,14: The word *for* indicates a further explanation of what Paul has said in verse 12. Paul begins here to focus on the Gentile believers (Vv 13-24), drawing particular attention to the truth of verse 12, of how the inclusion of the full number of the elect Jews would be a blessing to the world at large. Paul is one of these elect Jews that have brought a greater blessing to the world than just the falling away of physical Israel. What a blessing was the salvation of this individual Jew to the world! Indeed, how much more of a blessing will be the inclusion of the full number of the elect Jews into the Israel of God?

Paul's ministry is pre-eminently that of being the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 18:6; 22:21; Rom 1:5; 15:15,16; Gal 2:2; Eph 3:1,8; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 4:17), yet the purpose of God in salvation is such that his ministry is magnified, enlarged and made even more useful if some of the Jews are provoked to jealousy through his ministry and also embrace the gospel. Paul desires to at least save some by this means in his current ministry (10:19), yet knows that he will not save them all. Clearly Paul is not looking forward to some fanciful future restoration of the Jewish nation here, but the salvation of an elect remnant from among the physical nation of the Jews.

Verse 15: If the rejection of the physical nation of Israel has meant the reconciliation of the elect Gentiles to God, then the acceptance of the gospel by the elect Jews would surely be a spiritual resurrection (Lk 15:32; Eph 2:1-10) from spiritual death. Here were people who had rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ, clearly demonstrating that they were spiritually dead, yet when they exercised faith in Christ they demonstrated spiritual life. This is truly life from the dead, a spiritual resurrection.

Verse 16: If the firstfruits or the beginnings of God's elect are set apart for God, so are their spiritual descendents (4:9-12). The whole nation of Israel is not cast off, for God is accepting individuals within the physical nation through faith in Christ. Those who are of the same faith as Abraham are also acceptable to God. If the root is separated to God, so too are the branches of the tree. Believing Jews are holy branches that come from a holy root (cf 11:17,28).

Verses 17-21: Some of the cultivated branches of physical Israel were broken off because of unbelief (9:6; 11:20), and believing Gentiles are grafted into the 'family tree' of spiritual Israel because they have exercised faith in Christ (11:20), becoming partakers of the blessings of salvation that were offered to physical Israel (9:4,5). Not all of physical Israel has been cast away, but individual branches have been removed because of unbelief, these being not separated unto God through faith in Christ. In reality these were never part of the true Israel of God, but part of a nation that was given peculiar advantages and blessings (9:4,5), and had rejected the promises given to and embraced by

their fathers.

A Gentile believer is like a wild scion that has been grafted into an empty space of the 'family tree' of spiritual Israel by faith (Eph 2:11-22). Gentile believers should not become proud because they have been grafted into this tree, for they stand by faith, and if they do not then they too will also be cut out of Spiritual Israel. The elect Gentile is one who has been grafted into spiritual Israel from outside the original sphere of God's promises to Israel, and ought not to boast of his place, for salvation is of the Jews (Jn 4:22). He is simply a participant because of God's mercy, and for no other reason. Therefore there is no place for boasting.

Verses 22,23: The goodness and severity of God needs to be fully considered by the Gentiles. For those who fall are cut off, and fall under the severity and wrath of God, there is ultimate rejection. Those that continue to exercise faith continue to enjoy God's goodness (11:11,12; 2:4; Eph 2:7; Philip 2:12,13; 2 Thess 2:13; Tit 3:4).

The Jews are also able to enjoy the goodness of God, for the door still remains open to them should they exercise faith.

Verse 24: How much easier is it to graft in a piece of the cultivated tree if they believe (9:27; 11:5), as opposed to the wild (Jn 4:22) that is contrary to nature, from unbelief to grace and faith (Gal 3:19)? Belief in the gospel is something that is completely foreign to Gentiles, whereas the Jew has been brought up in the teachings of the Old Testament.

Verse 25: Paul does not want the church at Rome to be ignorant of the fact that there is still opportunity for the Jews to enter into the Israel of God by faith. This is a truth that has been clearly revealed by God. The whole nation of physical Israel has not been rejected by God, for there are some that have not been hardened in unbelief, as was the case in the days of Elijah (11:2-5). This hardening is only partial, yet it will continue this way until all the elect Gentiles are saved (9:27; 10:16,21; 11:3). There still remains a remnant according to the election of grace (9:27; 11:1-5) that has not been hardened.

This is the permanent continuing pattern of the gospel era, the verse not once referring to a future mass conversion of the Jews (See Ps 110:1 for similar word usage). This will be the continuing pattern '*until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in,*' because when the last of the elect is saved, the world will be at its end. When that last elect Gentile sinner is saved, the full number of spiritual Israel will have been saved.

NOTE: INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY QUESTION HERE: Who are the 'all Israel' of verse 26?

Verses 26,27: This verse does not say, '*and then all...*' but '*so all Israel will be saved.*' This verse is a summary statement of Paul's preceding argument. When the last of the elect Gentiles is saved, so all spiritual Israel will be accounted for. Not one of the elect

will have been lost, for all would be present and accounted for within spiritual Israel.

Paul speaks of the accomplishment of the salvation of all of God's elect, therefore the whole of spiritual Israel will be saved. He speaks of the salvation of the elect, or the remnant according to the election of grace, and does not refer to the total body of physical Israel at some time in the future (1 Thess 2:14-16), just prior to His return. Paul has been explaining the continuing pattern of God's plan of salvation, and not a future, final mass conversion of physical Israel. This then is God's plan of salvation, even the full salvation of spiritual Israel, as the context makes abundantly clear.

Paul quotes from the Old Testament in order to prove his preceding argument (Is 59:20,21; 27:9; Mic 5:2; Jer 31:31ff) that the full salvation of all the elect will have been achieved, both Jews and Gentiles, and therefore that all Israel will have been saved from sin. These quotes come from a number of Old Testament passages, and speak of the deliverance from sin and the bestowment of salvation for the whole world through the Deliverer that has come out of Zion (Deut 18:15,18; Ps 14:7; 53:6; Is 2:3). It is a worldwide Israel that is in view in verses 26 and 27, being delivered from a spiritual affliction, even sin itself. The passage in no way gives weight to the view of a future restoration of physical Israel, but the full salvation of spiritual Israel.

Verse 28: The continuing pattern of God's salvation then is this, that the Jews are against the Gentiles because of the Gospel (11:11), but the elect Jews are chosen and loved according to the promises made to the fathers (Gen 17:7; 26:23,24; 28:12-15).

Verse 29: The inner effectual call of God pertains only to the elect and is not subject to change, and cannot be withdrawn. The elect Jews will be saved for it is part of the sovereign purpose of God to do so.

Verses 30,31: As Gentile believers had once been the enemies of God because of their rebellion, and have now obtained acceptance with God through the unbelief of the Jews (11:11) in mercy, so the elect in Israel who were rebellious, having been provoked to jealousy by the acceptance of the Gentiles (11:13,14) have also received mercy.

Verse 32: The apostle has now gone full circle, having brought us back to the place reached in Romans 3:9,19,20, for all have been condemned in sin (Gal 3:22,23), that God might be gracious and merciful to whom He wills, even the elect. The Jews have no special place in God's plan, that place being reserved for His elect only.

Verses 33-36: Reflecting on all the preceding (1:16-11:32), Paul filled with admiration and joy, expresses his praise to God for the salvation He has wrought. It is a salvation that declares the Wisdom and Knowledge of God. It shows His ability to select the best possible means for attaining His purpose.

God's judgments and ways, especially in salvation, cannot be discovered. Paul quotes Isaiah 40:13 (1 Cor 2:16; Is 55:8) and Job 41:11 to express God's Majesty.

Finally Paul ascribes all things, especially salvation, to the Triune God, for He is the Source, the Power, and the Goal of salvation. So be it, Amen!

INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY

What are the mercies of God appealed to by Paul in Romans 12:1?

What are the practical implications of Romans 12:4,5?

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