# Men’s Bible Study – December 13, 2023

Romans 11:25-36 NASB

**Pronoun choice**: write one of these objects to understand the 26 pronouns used in this section of Scripture:

Church, God, Israel, Gentiles, Paul, Justified

1. For **I [ ]**
   * 1. do not want **you [ ]**, brethren,
        + 1. to be uninformed of this mystery—
          2. so that **you [ ]** will not be wise in **your [ ]** own estimation—
     2. that a partial hardening has happened to Israel
        + 1. until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; {Verse 25}
          2. and so all Israel will be saved;

just as it is written,

“THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,

**HE**  **[ ]**WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.” {Verse 26}

“THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH **THEM [ ]**,

WHEN **I [ ]** TAKE AWAY **THEIR [ ]** SINS.” {Verse 27}

1. From
   * 1. the standpoint of the gospel
     2. **they [ ]** are enemies for **your [ ]** sake,
        + 1. but from the standpoint of God’s choice
          2. **they [ ]** are beloved for the sake of the fathers; {Verse 28}
     3. for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. {Verse 29]
2. For
   * 1. just as **you [ ]** once were disobedient to God,
     2. but now have been shown mercy because of **their [ ]** disobedience, {Verse 30}
3. so
   * 1. these also now have been disobedient,
     2. that because
        + 1. of the mercy shown to **you**  **[ ]**
          2. **they**  **[ ]**also may now be shown mercy. {Verse 31}
4. For
   * 1. God has shut up **all [ ]** in disobedience.
     2. so that He may show mercy to **all**.  **[ ] {**Verse 32]
5. Oh, the depth of the riches
   1. both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
   2. How unsearchable are **His [ ]** judgments and unfathomable **His [ ]** ways! {Verse 33}
   3. For WHO
      1. HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD,
      2. OR WHO BECAME **HIS [ ]** COUNSELOR?
      3. Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO **HIM [ ]**
   4. THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO **HIM**  **[ ]**AGAIN? {Verse 34}
      1. For from **Him [ ]** and through **Him [ ]** and to **Him**  **[ ]**
         1. are all things. {Verse 35}
         2. To **Him**  **[ ]**be the glory forever. Amen. {Verse 36}

# Words: it is all Greek to me!

**katá** – 34 times in Romans and 3 times in the 11th chapter: Romans 11:2, 11:5, 11:28

* NASB **“The standpoint” “In accordance”, “according to”, “because”. “speaking in terms of”**
* To stoop or bend down to examine (Mounce)
* To come down from, through out, according to, toward, along (Thayer)
* In Romans 11:28. “From the ‘katá’ {stopping and bending to examine} the gospel, they [the Jews] are enemies of your [Gentile] sake, but from a ‘katá’ {stopping and bending to examine} of God’s choice they [Jews] are beloved for the sake of the Fathers.

**mystḗrion** – 2 times in Romans and once in Chapter 11- Romans 11:25

* NASB “**Mystery**”
* Mystery, secret; often refers to a misunderstood part of the OT that, with Christ's coming, is now unveiled (Mounce)
* A hidden thing, secret, mystery, religious secrets, confided only to the initiated and not to ordinary mortals, not obvious to the understanding, the secret counsels which govern God in dealing with the righteous, which are hidden from ungodly and wicked men but plain to the godly(Thayer)

**adelphós** – 19 times in Romans and once in Chapter 11 – Romans 11:25

* NASB “**brethren**” or “**brothers**”
* Brother, fellow countryman, neighbor (often inclusive in gender); by extension a fellow believer in the family of faith; in the plural brothers regularly refers to men and women. (Mounce)
* Brother, whether born of the same two parents or only of the same father or mother, having the same national ancestor, belonging to the same people, or countryman, any fellow or man, a fellow believer, united to another by the bond of affection, an associate in employment or office, brethren in Christ, his brothers by blood, all men, apostles, Christians, as those who are exalted to the same heavenly place. (Thayer)

**plḗrōma** – Four times in Romans and twice in Chapter 11 – Romans 11:12, Romans 11:25

* NASB “**Fullness**” “**Fulfillment**”
* That which is (has been) filled, a ship inasmuch as it is filled (i.e. manned) with sailors, rowers, and soldiers, in the NT, the body of believers, as that which is filled with the presence, power, agency, riches of God and of Christ. (Thayer)
* That which fills or with which a thing is filled, of those things which a ship is filled, freight and merchandise, sailors, oarsmen, soldiers.(Thayer)

The object that receives or the objects that fills. Both can be considered when considering the text specifically in the context of the scripture. The examination of all uses of this word the majority is usually the quantity to fill. (Monson)

**ametamélētos** – Once in Romans Chapter 11 – Romans 11:29

NASB – “**Irrevocable**” KJV – “**Without repentance**”

Without regret, so, not revokable. (Mounce)

No guilt, or regret, no second thoughts, no reason to take it back (Monson)

**Echthrós** – 3 times in Romans and 1 time in Chapter 11 – Romans 11:28

NASB “**Enemies**”

Hated, odious, hateful, hostile, hating, and opposing another. Used of men as at odds with God by their sin, opposing (God) in the mind, hostility. (Thayer)

Advisory, one that is in opposition toward, enemy, foe. (Strong)

**Pântas –** 68 times in Romans and three times here in Chapter 11: Romans 11:26, 32, 36.

NASB “**All**” and “**All Things**”

Individually inclusive, each, every, any, all, the whole, everyone, all things, everything (Thayer)

Collectively, some or quantity of every type. (Thayer)

Any, every, and whole. (Strong)

## Summary of this section

This section of Paul’s dissertation, the end of his argument and discovered he had written himself into a rabbit hole. It was a tough situation for him, for the Jews in the Church in Rome, for Jews in their totality. He had stated that the Jews had been and are now hardened of heart, mind and soul. He had used examples of his own ethnicity, of Jewish prophets and leaders, and then gave analogies and allegory of lumps and branches to help the Jews to understand.

Note: There has been through history of the church a very unfortunate relationship between the church and the Jews, and unfortunately, the church has been responsible for much of the persecution of the Jews today. Much of the Catholic Church led in the persecution of the Jews, Martin Luther broke away from the Catholic Church, he carried with him this anti-Semitism, and Martin Luther also encouraged the persecution of the Jews.

It crept on into Protestantism. There are many Protestant ministers today who are very anti-Semitic. There are those who would seem to want to elevate themselves as being better than the natural natural branches, "God's cut them off, God is through with them; we are now the people." And Paul states here, "Wait a minute, you are a wild olive branch and you have been grafted into the vine or into the tree, which is contrary to nature. Yes they were broken off because of their unbelief, you were grafted in by faith, and some of the broken will be restored, so don't be so high-minded."

The Jews had rejected the Messiah Jesus. And Paul’s dilemma was “HOW DOES THIS FIT IN GOD’S PLAN FOR ISRAEL”?

Jesus was crucified because of the hardening of the Jews to a point of rejection of the promise they were looking to have fulfilled. And Paul was telling the Jews this is a good thing! It gave the opportunity for all to be saved. “All have fallen short of God’s perfect plan and all can be saved.” The act of rejection was good because it gave a method of returning. The rejection of the Jews released the Gentiles to find salvation.

The problem that underlies this line of logic is it tries to reconcile two seemingly opposing ideas:

1. The absolute sovereignty of God. He is Lord of all.
2. The absolute free will of every individual person.

To solve this problem Paul insisted that God’s sovereignty is upheld by the hardening of the hearts to a point of rejection by choice. God did not force a choice one way or the other. God did not say you will die in your sins because you are a Jew.

# Scriptures referenced.

GENESIS 17:7,8 **And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for 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 sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God**

ISAIAH 59:20,21– “**And a Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,” – declares the Lord, 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, no from the mouth of your offsprings, offspring, says the Lord, from now and forever.**

Jeremiah 31:35-36 **Thus says the Lord, Who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar. The Lord of hosts is His name. If this fixed order departs from me, declares the Lord, then the offspring of Israel also cease from being a nation before me forever.**

Jeremiah 31:31 **Behold, day are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.**

Ezekiel 37:21 **Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have been gone, and I will gather them from every sid and bring them to their own land.**

Ezekiel 37:24 **And my servant David will be king over them, and they will have one shepherd and they will walk in My ordnances, and keep my statutes, and observe them.**

Ezekiel 37:28 **And the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forever.**

Acts 1:6-7 **And so they had come together, they were asking HIM, saying, “Lord is it at this time YOU are restoring the Kingdom to Israel?” And HE said to them, “It is not for you to know the times or epochs which the Father has fixed by HIS own authority”**

Acts 3:17 **And it shall be in the last days, God says, that I will pour fourth of My Spirit upon all mankind. And your sons and your daughters will prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men will dream dreams.**

Acts 3:21 **And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

Romans 11:33-36 **Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became his counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory for ever AMEN.**

# Commentary

* In this section all quotes of scripture are from the New American Standard Bible unless noted, and are *italicized*. Further any use of a word found in the Greek section above will be **bolded**. Any quotes from other texts will be underlined.

## Romans 11:25-27

## 25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this **mystery**—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the **fullness** of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,

## "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob." 27 "This is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."

### Barclay translation/paraphrase

Brothers, I do want you to grasp this secret which only those who know God can understand, because I do not want you to become conceited about your own wisdom. I want you to understand that it is only a partial hardening which has happened to Israel, and it will last only until the full number of the Gentiles shall have come in. And then, in the end, all Israel will be saved, as it stands written: "A Saviour will come forth from Zion; and he will remove all kinds of wickedness from Jacob. This is the fulfilment of my covenant with them when I take away their sins." As far as the good news goes, they are enemies of God--but it is for your sake. But as far as God's choice goes, they are beloved of God, for their fathers' sakes, for the free gifts and the calling of God can never be gone back upon. Once you disobeyed God, but now you have found his mercy because of their disobedience; just so, they have now disobeyed, so that they now may enter into the same mercy as you have now found. For God has shut up all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all.

God has used the hardening of Israel to give the Gentiles the opportunity to receive the gospel, but neither the hardening of Israel nor the opportunity for the Gentiles will last for ever. God is using the conversion of the Gentiles to bring about the salvation of Israel. When Paul uses the words ‘full number’ and ‘all’ in speaking of the salvation of the Gentiles and of Israel, he is not saying that every Gentile and every Israelite will be saved. He has clearly shown earlier that faith, not nationality, is the basis of salvation. What he reveals here is how God is bringing about the completion of his great plan to build for himself a universal and everlasting people.

1. Here Paul is using the word “**mystery**” to point out something that has not been understood well or not fully known. It is a idea which is so deep, profound, and difficult of comprehension, that it cannot be apprehended without special direction and instruction. There are many views on this:
   * It signifies the doctrine of the future restoration of the Jews.
   * It is the reason for the hardening of the Jews.
   * It is about the timing of some great event.
   * Is it about the inescapable change from a Jewish Church to a Gentile Church.
   * It is about the understanding of sovereignty and free will.
   * It is the reason for the rejection of Jesus.
   * It is the advent of a new age of Gentiles.
   * It is the fullness of the Gentiles.
   * ALL OF THE ABOVE because they are all inextricably tied together.
2. **Wise in your estimation,** the converted Gentiles had not behaved toward the Jews with compassion and good will. They were saying we know better of the grace of God because we lived in paganism, you had a single God who you rejected. required.
3. **Partial blindness**, or blindness to a part of them. They were not all unbelievers: several thousands of them had been converted to the Christian faith; though the body of the nation, and especially its rulers, civil and spiritual, continued opposed to Christ and his doctrine.
4. In the face of the text, it seems to state that the nations of the Gentiles shall take the place of Israel. But this view must be discarded because the Jews will continue in a state of blindness till such time as some quantity or quality of Gentiles shall be converted to the Christian faith. Then the remnant of the Jews, shall be excited, by a spirit of emulation, to examine and acknowledge the validity of the proofs of Christianity, and embrace the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. This raises a number of questions:
   1. What are the signs of the end times?
   2. Is Paul giving hints as to the requirements for the end of the age?
   3. What is the fullness of the Gentiles?
   4. Does God have a number of Gentiles to be saved in mind from the beginning of time?
   5. Is there a difference between the fulfillment of the Jews and the fulness of the Gentiles?
   6. Is this one of the requirements for the rapture?
   7. If God’s grace is for all people, why does he first prefer Jews and subsequently prefer Gentiles?
5. Paul recognized that Israel’s failure to accept the Messiah when He came offering the Kingdom of God to all stopped the timetable for setting up that Kingdom on earth at that time. Instead God is waiting on the Gentiles because Christ died to pay for the sins of all. In so doing, Christ fulfilled the promise God made to Abraham that in Abraham’s seed all the peoples of the earth will be blessed.
6. From the Jewish Awareness Web site: “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… the fullness of the Gentiles will be completed when God’s present task of winning Jew and Gentile to Christ is completed.“ They seem to state that the “Age of the Gentiles” include saved Jews.

## Romans 11:28-32 God’s way of saving Israel and the Nations

Here is the NASB translation with insertion of the [proper noun] inserted after the pronoun.

**28 From the standpoint of the gospel they [Jews] are enemies for your [Gentiles] sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they [Jews] are beloved for the sake of the fathers; 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 For just as you [Gentiles] once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their [Jew] disobedience, 31 so these [Jews] also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you [Gentiles] they [Jews] also may now be shown mercy. 32 For God has shut up all [Jew and Gentile] in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all [Jew and Gentile].**

When the pronouns are identified and understood there is a hint at the complexity of this portion of scripture.

From here we need to associate the action that is associated with the pronouns.

**Jews**:

1. **Enemies** of the Gospel to the advantage of the Gentiles. Paul sets out the paradox of the Jewish place in the plan of God. In order that the Gentiles might come in and that the universal purpose of the gospel might be fulfilled, the Jews had arrived at a situation where they were the enemies of God.

It is difficult to translate this idea, because **enemy** has both an active and a passive meaning. It can mean either hating or hated. It may well be that in this passage it has to be read in the two meanings at the one time. The Jews became the foe, the advisory against the mind of God to create an environment where the Gentiles would be grafted into the natural root of God.

1. **Beloved for the sake of the Fathers**

The Jews were favored and beloved even if they were enemies because of the promises God made to the Patriarchs. God had made promises that were never to be taken back. God would never have a thought of the choice of the Jews to bring Him to the world was wrong.

Nothing could alter the fact that they were God's chosen people and had a special place in his plan. No matter what they did, God could never go back upon his word. His promise had been made to the fathers, and it must be fulfilled. It was therefore clear to Paul, and he quotes Isaiah 59:20-21 to prove it, that God's rejection of the Jews could not be permanent; they, too, in the end must come to Jesus.

1. Disobedience of the Jews to the advent of the Messiah Jesus and the method of grace. They were dependent upon their works to justify.
2. Will be shut up. Paul was sure that this hardening of the hearts of the Jews and rephrased as being “**shut up**” was neither total nor permanent. It was to serve a purpose, and when that purpose had been achieved, it would be taken away.
3. Will be shown mercy. They were shut up in disobedience that he may have mercy upon all. The one thing Paul cannot conceive of is that any man of any nation could merit his own salvation. Now, if the Jews had observed complete obedience to God's will, they might well have reckoned that they had earned the salvation of God as a right. So Paul is saying that God involved the Jews in disobedience in order that when his salvation did come to them it might be unmistakably an act of his mercy and due in no way to their merit. Neither Jew nor Gentile could ever be saved apart from the mercy of God.

**Gentiles:**

1. Have an **enemy** for your sake

Again here there is a reason there is enmity between the Jew the Gospel in the time of the Romans and even now. Very subtly, Paul is saying the opposition to the inclusion of the Gentiles into the Love of God was seen as an enemy. God has always viewed his creation as worthy for redemption. The opposition of the Jew to include the Gentile set themselves up to thwart the will of God. Their attitude of works over faith, and the exclusivity of the Jew was a great wall set before the Gentiles. This wall made some jealous and became proselytes to the Jewish understanding of Righteousness. And Paul here was saying this great wall of self righteousness made them an enemy for the sake of the Gentiles.

1. Disobedience of the Gentiles refers to the pagan beliefs and practices which the Gentiles adhered. Polytheism of the Greeks and Romans, intellectual self-righteousness, and Emperor worship, were both a part of this disobedience.
2. Will be shut up along with the Jews. The word all is inclusive. The Judicial hardening was and is for all people. The more you sin the more you will sin. Even the Gentiles are subject to the hardening of their hearts. Again, like the Jews, Paul was sure that this hardening of the hearts of the Jews and the gentiles was neither total nor permanent. It was to serve a purpose, and when that purpose had been achieved, it would be taken away.
3. Will be shown mercy. There is no reason for salvation, forgiveness and justification if there is no disobedience. Without the effort to be self-righteous there is no need for God’s righteousness. The Gentiles were to be grafted in, to grow, to produce fruit, and yes, to be pruned once and a while.

# Conclusion

God chose Israel to see their failure and give up on the vain effort to keep the Law for the laws sake. God chose a people to understand their plight of falling short of God’s ideal and find by grace forgiveness. It is not a nation that gives them justification. It is not a temple that brings grace. It is not sacrifices of bulls and goats that remove the guilt.

There always was and always be a path for both the Jew and the Gentile to find grace by faith. The mercy shown to you the Gentiles is available and one of the reasons it is available was because the Jews made self righteousness a priority and that hardened their hearts, SO that you as a Gentile might see.

And conversely when we as gentiles have truly conformed to God’s will then the fullness of the Gentiles will have come.

Then the veil that covers the Jews eyes will be removed. The entirety of the book of Romans to this point was unity between the Jews and Gentiles. When this unity is finally complete God will have mercy on us all. We Gentiles can't boast over the broken branches because our disobedience is going to be a means of their salvation and they can't boast over us because their Disobedience was a means of our Salvation. We are both serving the other through our own sinfulness. Therefore, God strips us of all our ability to boast in ourselves and he shows himself alone as the source of Salvation which is all by mercy.

In many ways Paul's argument may seem strange to us and the "proofs" he brings forward unconvincing. Our minds and hearts may even shudder at some of the things he says. But the argument is not irrelevant, for the tremendous thing behind of all is a philosophy of history. To Paul, God was in control. Nothing moved with aimless feet. Not even the most heartbreaking event was outside the purpose of God. Events could never run amok. The purposes of God could never be frustrated.

To that Paul would have added another tremendous conviction. He would have insisted that in it and through it all, Gods purpose was a purpose of salvation and not of destruction. It may well be that Paul would even have gone the length of saying that God's arranging of things was designed to save men even against their will. In the last analysis it was not the wrath of God which was pursuing men, but the love of God which was tracking them down.

The situation of Israel was and is exactly that which Francis Thompson so movingly portrayed in The Hound of Heaven.

*"I fled him down the nights and down the days;*

*I fled him down the arches of the years;*

*I fled him down the labyrinthine ways*

*Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears*

*I hid from him, and under running laughter.*

*But with unhurrying chase,*

*And unperturbed pace,*

*Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,*

*They beat--and a Voice beat*

*More instant than the feet--*

*All things betray thee, who betrayest me.'"*

*Then comes the time when the fugitive is beaten.*

*"Naked I wait thy love's uplifted stroke!*

*My harness piece by piece thou hast hewn from me,*

*And smitten to my knee,*

*I am defenseless utterly."*

*Then comes the end:*

*"Halts by me that footfall;*

*Is my gloom. after all,*

*Shade of his hand, outstretched caressingly?*

*'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,*

*I am he whom thou seekest!*

*Thou drove me to love from you, who drove me!'"*