

GETTING JACOB SAVED
ROMANS 11:35-36

BIG IDEA: THERE ARE FOUR POWERFUL REASONS TO BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE, LITERAL RESTORATION OF ISRAEL.

REASON #1: IT KEEPS THE GENTILE BELIEVERS HUMBLE ABOUT THEIR STANDING WITH GOD. VERSES 25-27, *I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.* ²⁶ *And, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.* ²⁷ *And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."*

1. Israel's Unbelief Is for Gentile Benefit. **Verse 25,** *...mystery...a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.*
 - Mystery: *musterion*—A God thing that would be unknown to us unless God disclosed it to us in an act of revelation.
 - **musth, rion,** ου, το, *mystery, secret; (1) as a religious technical term in the cults of the Greco-Roman world, a religious secret confided only to the initiated, secret rite, not used in the NT; (2) in the NT; (a) as what can be known only through revelation mediated from God what was not known before (MT 13.11); (b) as a supreme redemptive revelation of God through the gospel of Christ mystery (RO 16.25; EP 3.9); (c) as the hidden meaning of a symbol with metaphorical significance mystery (EP 5.32)* ¹
 - **MORRIS:** *"...is used by Paul 20 (or 21; see 1 Cor. 2:1) times out of 27 (28) in the New Testament..."*
 - Cf. **Romans 16:25-27,** *Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past,* ²⁶ *but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him--* ²⁷ *to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.—* **MURRAY:** *"virtually furnishes a definition"*
 - What exactly is the core of this mystery?
 - Not the hardening—Paul has already discussed this at length.
 - Not that all the elect would be saved (as Lenski argues)—that is no mystery.
 - **MOO:** *[W]hat Paul has not yet explicitly taught, and what entails a reversal in current Jewish belief, is the sequence by which "all Israel" will be saved: Israel hardened until the Gentiles come in and in this way "all Israel" being saved.... [W]holly novel was the idea that the inauguration of the eschatological age would involve setting aside the majority of Jews while Gentiles streamed in to enjoy the blessings of salvation and that only when that stream had been exhausted would Israel as a whole experience these blessings.* ²
 - Other New Testament "Mysteries":
 - The Mystery of the Kingdom: **Mark 4:11** *He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you"*
 - The New Testament Gospel message: **Romans 16:25-26** *Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past,* ²⁶ *but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him—*
 - A Crucified Savior: **1 Corinthians 2:2, 7**
 - The Rapture: **1 Corinthians 15:51**

¹ Bibleworks Friberg Lexicon

² Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 716-717

- The Church: **Ephesians 1:9-10**
 - The Church: **Ephesians 3:6**
 - The Church as the Body of Christ:
 - The Gospel: **Ephesians 6:19**
 - Christ Himself: **Colossians 2:2**
 - The Mystery of Iniquity: **2 Thessalonians 2:7**
 - The Mystery of the Faith: **1 Timothy 3:9**
 - The Mystery of Godliness: **1 Timothy 3:16**
 - The Mystery of the Seven Stars: **Revelation 1:20**
 - The Mystery of God (end-times judgment?): **Revelation 10:7**
 - Mystery Babylon (the end-times capitol city of evil): **Revelation 17:5**
 - The End-Times Evil City and Satan: **Revelation 17:7**
- Full number of the Gentiles:
 - Lit., *fullness=plaroma* (so NAS). Might refer to a certain number of Gentiles to be saved, or fullness of blessing on the Gentiles, or the full contribution of the Gentiles, or the Gentiles as a whole.³
 - *Fullness: MOO: The word consistently has a qualitative meaning in the Bible—“fulfillment,” “completion,” “fullness.” Some scholars therefore think that the “fullness of the Gentiles” means simply the “full blessing” that God intends to bestow on the Gentiles, or perhaps the “completion” of the Gentile mission. But the imagery of “coming in” does not fit this concept very well. Furthermore, Paul is probably borrowing here another concept from Jewish apocalyptic: the idea of a fixed number of people whom God has destined for salvation. These considerations suggest that the Gentiles’ “fullness” involves a numerical completion: God has determined to save a certain number of Gentiles, and only when that number has been reached will Israel’s hardening be removed. The “fullness of Israel” (v. 12) is therefore matched by a “fullness of the Gentiles.”⁴*
2. Israel’s Future Belief Will Blow Away Gentile Conversion Statistics. **Verse 26, so all Israel will be saved**
- All Israel:
 - Not every Israelite without exception, just as there have been exceptions to the hardening.
 - Refers to the nation as a whole.
 - Alternative interpretations:
 - Refers to the **people of God** regardless of ethnicity, i.e., *spiritual Israel* (so Calvin). However, so far in Romans, Paul has referred to Israel **ten times**, and in every case he means ethnic, national Israel, not a spiritually metaphorical people. In one of those passages (**Romans 9:6-8**) Paul does limit the meaning of “Israel” to “spiritual Israel,” but in that case he makes his meaning very clear and in that one verse uses the term “Israel” in both ethnic and spiritual senses.
 - Refers only to the **elect Jews** (so Lenski)—But this would be no “mystery” and empties Paul’s comments of their intended “WOW” factor.
 - **MOO: ...Paul’s teaching about a final ingathering of Jewish people has no parallel elsewhere in his writings.**⁵

³ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 420.

⁴ Moo, 718-719.

⁵ Moo, 739. *But this may be explained by the contingent character of all Paul wrote. In most of the situations where Paul taught about Israel or the Jews he was concerned to establish the right of Gentiles to enter fully into the people of God—usually against a Jewish-oriented attempt to exclude them or to impose inappropriate restrictions on them (e.g., Rom. 3-4; Galatians; Phil. 3). Only in Rom. 11,*

- Saved:
 - Surprisingly, **John Walvoord** takes this as physical deliverance, not spiritual salvation: *The salvation in view is not that of freedom from the guilt of sin, but deliverance from persecution and trial.*⁶—**However** spiritual deliverance is **exactly** what is in view in Paul's supporting OT quotation in **Verse 26 of Isaiah 59:20-21** "**The Redeemer will come to Zion**, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins," declares the LORD. ²¹ "As for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD. "My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of their descendants from this time on and forever," says the LORD. AND in **Verse 27 of Isaiah 27:9** By this, then, will **Jacob's guilt be atoned for**, and this will be the full fruitage of the **removal of his sin**: When he makes all the altar stones to be like chalk stones crushed to pieces, no Asherah poles or incense altars will be left standing.
- 3. Jew and Gentile Stand on Level Ground at the Foot of the Cross. **Verse 26**, he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. **Verse 27**, when I take away their sins."
 - Note **God's initiative** here: **He** turns—**He** takes away.
 - Note the **cusp of the action** taken: **Removal of sin**. **MORRIS**: *The particular aspect of the covenant to which attention is drawn is that which has to do with the forgiveness of sins (cf. Jer. 31:34). This does not mean that the covenant is concerned only with forgiveness; in fact a good deal more is involved. But Paul's subject throughout these chapters is justification by faith and how what happened and will happen to Israel fits into that great doctrine. So he concentrates on the sins aspect.*⁷

REASON #2: IT HONORS THE VERACITY OF GOD. VERSES 28-29, 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, ²⁹ for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

1. God Made Unconditional Promises to the Patriarchs. **Verse 28**, on account of the patriarchs
2. God Has Always Has a Special Place in His Heart for the Jews. **Verse 28**, they are loved
 - Apple of the eye:
 - **Deuteronomy 32:9-11** For the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance. ¹⁰ In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye, ¹¹ like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions.
3. God Will Keep His Promises to Israel—He **Always** Keeps His Promises. **Verse 28**, as far as election is concerned. **Verse 29**, for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.
 - **Isaiah 54:10** Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.
 - **Irrevocable gifts**: I.e., the gifts mentioned in **Romans 9:4-5** *Theirs is the **adoption** as sons; theirs the **divine glory**, the **covenants**, the receiving of the **law**, the **temple worship** and the **promises**.* ⁵ *Theirs are the **patriarchs**, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*

REASON #3: IT ITALICIZES THE MERCIFULNESS OF GOD. VERSES 30-32, Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, ³¹ 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. ³² For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

apparently, did Paul face a situation in which he needed to remind Gentile Christians of the continuing significance of Israel's election.

⁶ John Walvoord, *Israel in Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 112.

⁷ Morris, 422.

NOTE A HISTORICAL TEMPLATE: Habakkuk 3:2 *LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.*

1. What's Good for the Goose... **Verse 30**, *Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy*
 2. Is Good for the Gander. **Verse 31**, *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.*
 - **MOO:** *The last day...will reveal that God has treated all equally" "imprisoning" all in disobedience—Gentiles before Christ; Jews since Christ's coming—so that he could have mercy on all—Gentiles in the present age; Jews (making up for their small numbers now), in great numbers at the end of the age.⁸*
- We All Swim in the Same Dirty Pond. **Verse 32**, *For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.*
- **Romans 3:9** *What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.*
 - **Verse 32: MORRIS:** *"given them over to disobedience".... Paul is not saying that God predetermined that all should sin, but rather that he has so ordered things that all people, Jew and Gen tile alike, being disobedient, show themselves to be sinners...and have no other escape than through his mercy.⁹*

REASON #4: IT BRINGS GLORY TO GOD. VERSES 33-36, *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ³⁴ "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" ³⁵ "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen*

NOTE: MORRIS--*Now comes a characteristic quotation from Scripture which seems to have elements from several passages (see Isa. 40:13; Job 15:8; Jer. 23:18...)¹⁰*

1. God's Dealing with the Jews is Mind-Blowing. **Verses 33-34**, *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ³⁴ "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"*
2. God's Grace Is Utterly Undeserved. **Verse 35**, *"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"*
 - **Romans 4:1-5** *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? ² If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about-- but not before God. ³ What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." ⁴ Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. ⁵ However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.*
3. God's Impressiveness Is Over the Top. **Verse 36**, *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen*
 - **Glory:** *doxa=that which is impressive, weighty.*
 - *as a manifestation of light radiance, brightness, splendor (AC 22.11); (2) as a manifestation of God's excellent power glory, majesty (RO 9.23); (3) as an excellent reputation honor, glory, praise (JN 5.44); (4) as a state characterized by honor, power, and remarkable appearance glory, splendor (LU 24.26); (5) of a person created in the image of God reflection, glory (1C 11.7); (6) **do,xai** as angelic powers around God angelic beings, majesties, dignities (JU 8)¹¹*

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⁸ Moo, 713.

⁹ Morris, 426.

¹⁰ Morris, 428.

¹¹ *Bibleworks* Friberg lexicon.

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