GOD'S GLORIOUS GOSPEL
Romans, chapter 11
The Gospel: all Israel Will Be Saved

I | CONTEXT AND CONNECTIONS

1 / In these three chapters, **chs 9-11,** Paul has been laying out in historical, theological, and doctrinal detail what God is doing with the Jews and Gentiles during this New Covenant Gospel era of salvation. With the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Great Commission to **go and make disciples of all the nations,** God has been fulfilling His eternal covenant plans and promises to comprise **His people** from all the peoples of the world. As Yahweh covenanted with Abraham [really, with Christ through Abraham], **in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.**
2 / In this concluding **ch 11** of this Gospel mystery trilogy, Paul will now reveal what God has planned yet to do for the Jews en-masse—and how He is going about to fulfill that Gospel covenant purpose...

II | vv 1-6 | God has not rejected His people

1 / Is God directing more and more of His salvation outreach to the Gentiles? Yes! Is He going to continue to do this to the end of this age? Yes! In fact, God will continue to save Gentiles **until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in [v 25].** That phrase has several dimensions which we won't get into right now, but Paul's present perspective and emphasis is on the elect Gentiles whom God will save in His plan of redemption. But, Paul uses the same expression to speak prospectively of God's on-going, and yet-future, plan to gather in greater numbers of Jewish [Israelite] believers as well **[v 12].** But, for now, we're looking at the then-and-now-current state of affairs in those whom Paul calls **God's people.** These are those who are true believers—who make up the kingdom of saved people.
2 / So, the truth of the matter is that God is not giving His most focused attention to saving ethnic Israelites as He did all throughout the Old Covenant era. Which brings up the question: **I ask, then, has God rejected His people?**—referring to ethnic Israelites, physical descendants of Abraham. Paul's answer is emphatically **By no means!** No! What God is doing among the Gentiles means that He is not saving *any or any more Jews!* Then Paul gives four examples—both historical and theological/doctrinal examples: **God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew from eternity [see ch 8.20]:**
[1] *Paul himself*—he is an Israelite.
[2] *Elijah and Israel during his day* **[1 Kings 19.10, 18].** Elijah wrongly thought he was the only faithful believer left in Israel. God reminds him **"I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."**
[3] *God's purpose according to election* **[see ch 9.11]. So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.** God had chosen and was saving many Jewish believers even while He seemed to be rejected them all—without exception...just like He did in Elijah's day.
[4] *Grace.* Those whom God saves are all saved by His undeserved, free, unmerited, sovereign *grace* apart from their own personal human efforts.

III | vv 7-10 | So, then, if God has not rejected His Israelite people 'in toto,' what is He doing?

1 / This is another follow-up explanation to what Paul has already expressed back in **ch 9.30-33.** God had revealed Himself to Israel so they would know Him; love Him with all their hearts; obey, serve, and worship Him only. Instead, Israel rejected God and took the Law God had given them to show them their need of Him—and sought with their every effort and in every generation of their history to **seek** to work out their own righteousness, apart from faith in God. Those who were true believers of faith and saved all throughout their Old Covenant generations were **the elect: The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened.** This means that God chose to give them what they chose for themselves—their own unbelief.

This, too, is a companion commentary to ch 9.14-18. God did with Israel what He had done with Pharaoh: He gave them what they chose—He have them over to the desires of their own hearts and wills.
2 / In these next OT quotations that Paul prefaces with **as it is written,** Paul recounts to Israel that they were only doing in that then-present generation what they had been doing going all the way back to Moses' day. In **v 8,** Paul quotes from **Isaiah 29.10, 13; Isaiah 6.9-10; Deuteronomy 29.4.** In that last reference, Paul credits Moses with the phrase **down to this very day.** Paul is speaking of *their* day—but his meaning is that what Israel was doing *in their day*, especially in rejecting Christ and His Gospel, is the same that Moses was complaining they were doing *in his day!* **But to this day The LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.** Moses was referring to the past forty years of wandering in the wilderness—in unbelief and rebellion against Yahweh—even before they entered the Promised Land. So, the sequence of quotations of their hard-hearted unbelief is Moses to Isaiah to Jesus and now to Paul.
3 / Paul concludes this section with a quotation from **Psalm 69.22-23** to describe Israel's darkened, hard-hearted unbelief. They were where they were because that is what they had chosen for themselves. They have no one to blame but themselves. As Paul has been reiterating, ***if God had not had mercy on those whom He had chosen to be saved, no one—not one!—of them would have been saved at all!***

IV | vv 11-24 | What God is doing is—He is 'grafting in' Gentiles into the covenant 'olive tree' of the redeemed people of God

1 / Once again, Paul acknowledges that Israel has **stumbled.** That is, they had found Christ and His Gospel to be offensive and unacceptable to their religious tastes, preferences, standards, and traditions. This **stumbling** again is a reiteration and follow-up to what he has already stated in **ch 9.30-33.** So, his question now is: **So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means!** We have all heard the common ad slogan: "I have fallen, and I can't get up!" That's what Paul is asking: Will Israel ever recover from their being set aside by God as the primary salvation outreach 'people of God' in preference for the Gentile nations? And, again, Paul's emphatic answer is **By no means!** So that means God still has plans for an en-masse gathering in of ethnic Jewish/Israelite people. Paul will explain what is going on here in this Gospel age in the next paragraphs...
2 / *When Israel rejected God's covenant mercy and grace—especially in rejecting Christ, their promised Messiah—God began His eternal plan of sending His Gospel to the Gentiles. And this was **so as to make Israel jealous.*** Paul has already introduced this **'to make you jealous'** intention back in **ch 10.19,** quoting from **Deuteronomy 32.21.** What we have to see here is that God's Gospel outreach to the Gentiles is not His 'plan B'—it has been His plan all along, from the beginning. God knew what He was going to do with Christ and the Gospel even before He began to do the first thing He did—even **from before the foundation of the world [Ephesians 1.4].** How is God going to make Israel jealous? Well, when they see the Gospel covenant benefits—the ones they used to receive, know, and enjoy exclusively—being now given to Gentiles, they will begin to wish they had them back for themselves again! That is what God is doing now through us Gentiles, and He's going to do it in greater, much more gracious, proportions in times to come—as we shall see.
3 / *Israel's **trespass** and **failure** [rejecting God's love, covenant, and Christ] now **means riches for the world, riches for the Gentiles, reconciliation of the world.*** That is, we are now enjoying the New Covenant mercies of God in salvation.
4 / *However, even while God is 'by-passing' Israel en-masse to save the Gentiles, there is coming a time when Israelites/Jews will be 're-included' en-masse: **how much more will their full inclusion mean ... what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?*** You can think of Ezekiel's vision of the valley of the dry bones coming to resurrected life again, **Ezekiel 37.** That may be what Paul means to say in **v 16: If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.** It may be that Paul sees the 'minority' salvation of Israelites—both in the OT and in his present day, what he calls **a remnant, chosen by grace [v 5]**—as the **firstfruits,** bearing the promise of the larger in-gathering yet to come, **For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable [v 29].**

5 / *So, now, having used the word 'branches' to refer to the saved Jews, those who were* ***'of the faith of Abraham'*** *and not just physical descendants—Paul now uses the figure of* ***'the olive tree'*** *to describe the covenant family of faith—which is now comprised of both believing Jews and believing Gentiles.* He refers to the unbelieving Jews by saying **'some of the branches were broken off.'** That is, God hardened them in their unbelief and rejected them from the covenant 'family [olive] tree.' In their place, we Gentiles, as **a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree.** What we must see here is that, **the olive tree** is not Abraham, or the nation of Israel, or ethnic Jews. ***The nourishing root of the olive tree is CHRIST, and His Gospel!*** We Gentiles are NOT grafted into any national Israel or ethnic Jewish root. We are grafted into CHRIST, **'in Him'!** CHRIST Himself is the Gospel of God's righteousness that Paul has been proclaiming all throughout this letter.
6 / *There is a stern, stark warning that Paul issues to us Gentiles!* ***"...do not be arrogant toward the branches*** *[Jews].* ***If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root supports you. Then you will say, 'Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.' That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches*** *[Jews],* ***neither will He spare you. Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in His kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off."*** That's why we don't embrace or practice any kind of anti-Semitism or any kind of anti-any other ethnicity or people group, for that matter, just because they are the ethnicity they are. We evangelize and freely offer the saving Gospel of Christ to every ethnicity and people group without discriminating against any.
7 / *And then, Paul makes this emphatic statement about the re-inclusion of any Jew who will receive Christ and believe His Gospel that will lead us into the next paragraph:* ***And even they*** *[Jews],* ***if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again.*** It is understood here, that this **'God has the power to graft them in again'** is none other than **The Gospel, the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek [ch 1.16].** Paul continues: **For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.**
8 / This is where—and how—Paul foresees the en-masse turning of many ethnic Jews to Christ, believing in Him and His Gospel, and being saved. I don't profess to know—and won't attempt to speculate—when or where that will occur. Or whether it will be a world-wide, sudden, revival of faith among ethnic Jews, or whether it will be more gradual, over time, conversions of Jews in various places. All I know, from the reading of these words, is that God's covenant purpose and plan is to convert *many* ethnic Jews to faith in Christ. AND, I also know that they will be saved the same way all the grafted-in Gentiles have been saved: by faith in Christ, through the faithful Great Commission proclamation of the Lord's churches, and by the one and only Gospel of Jesus Christ. And when they are saved, they will lose their distinction of being Jews—they will be **grafted back** into Christ. And, **"...in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" [Galatians 3.28-29].**

V | vv 25-32 | Paul sums up this whole message in chs 9-11 as God's eternal 'mystery' that He is now revealing...

1 / Once again, Paul warns us Gentiles **[see vv 13, 18, 20],** that we must not **be wise in your own sight.** We didn't think up this eternal, historical, and cosmic plan of salvation—and especially not in this inscrutable, incomprehensible way. What Paul is revealing here is **this mystery.** In the Bible's use of this term, a **mystery** is not some kind of 'whodunit' riddle that can't be solved. A Bible **mystery** is something that before was concealed in shadows and types and cryptic prophesies, but is now being brought out into the clear light of understanding. If you want to know more about this **mystery** that Paul is briefly

summarizing here in Romans, read it in **Ephesians 2.11—3.13.** He uses the term **mystery** at least four times there. But he is describing in the **Ephesians** passage the same **mystery** he is proclaiming here in Romans.

2 / And what is this Divine, **mystery** of God's wisdom, grace, and Providence? It is **a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.** The **partial hardening** was climaxed, culminated, and consummated when Israel rejected Christ and delivered Him up to be crucified **[see Acts 2.22-23].** And at that same time, God sent His Gospel of saving Grace to be proclaimed among the Gentiles. That's what Paul has been describing in this chapter. This Gospel outreach to the Gentiles will continue **until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.** But, when Paul calls it **a partial hardening ... upon Israel,** he is taking into account that, at the same time, God will be **grafting Jewish believers into Christ.** His elect Jews will be saved along with His elect Gentiles. Just that many of them will be ethnic Israelites. **And in this way all Israel will be saved...** And then Paul quotes from **Isaiah 59.20-21; Jeremiah 31.31, 34; Isaiah 27.9.** They will not be saved because they are ethnic Jews, or descendants from Abraham according to the flesh, or because they kept the Law [which they didn't], or because of their legacy and traditions as Jews—they will be saved by faith in Christ and Gospel, **when I take away their sins.**

3 / The ethnic Jews had opposed the Gospel, first in Christ and then in His apostles. All you have to do is read the book of Acts, follow the ministries of Paul and the other apostles—to see what Paul means when he says **As regards the Gospel, they are enemies for your sake.** Which means, because of their rejection of Christ and His Gospel, the Gospel had come to the Gentiles **[see especially Acts 13.44-48, 18.6].** But, because of God's covenant promises to their Jewish forefathers, God was going to save His elect from among many of them also: **But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.** This is yet another faithful response to Paul's previous statements: **But it is not as though the word [promise] of God as failed [9.6]; I ask then, has God rejected His people? By no means! [11.1]; So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! [11.11].**

4 / What a Gospel! What wisdom, what power, what invincible Providence of God! Through Israel's **disobedience,** the once also disobedient Gentiles have received **mercy.** Now, through the faithful proclamation of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ—when that Gospel is now preached and proclaimed back to the Jews, they too will receive **mercy!**

VI | vv 33-36 | WHAT A GOD! WHAT A GOSPEL!

1 / All Paul can do is erupt into worship and praise to God! Go back and read through **vv 30-32** again. And we must do the same! The true knowledge of God is the catalyst, primer, and fuel of all our true worship! What Paul has described that God has done is the kind of awesome wonder that makes us say: "I can't wrap my head around the greatness, the goodness, the Grace of our God!

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!
'For who has known the mind of God or who has been His counselor? [Isaiah 40.13-14]'
'Or who has given a gift to Him that he might be repaid? [Job 41.11]'
For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen"

2 / And, truly, to this anthem of praise, worship, and glory to God: ***"And all the people said, Amen!"***