



Romans 11:25-32 (ESV)

The Mystery of Israel's Salvation

²⁵ Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers:^[a] a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written,

“The Deliverer will come from Zion,
he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;
²⁷ “and this will be my covenant with them
when I take away their sins.”

²⁸ As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now^[b] receive mercy. ³² For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

Romans 11:25-32 (HCSB)

²⁵ So that you will not be conceited, brothers, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery: A partial hardening has come to Israel until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And in this way all^[a] Israel will be saved, as it is written:

The Liberator will come from Zion;
He will turn away godlessness from Jacob.
²⁷ And this will be My covenant with them^[b]
when I take away their sins.^[c]

²⁸ Regarding the gospel, they are enemies for your advantage, but regarding election, they are loved because of the patriarchs, ²⁹ since God’s gracious gifts and calling are irrevocable.^[d] ³⁰ As you once disobeyed God, but now have received mercy through their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now disobeyed, resulting in mercy to you, so that they also now^[e] may receive mercy. ³² For God has imprisoned all in disobedience, so that He may have mercy on all.

English Standard Version Bible - *Study Bible*¹

Romans 11:25-32

11:25 Paul discloses a **mystery** to the Gentiles to prevent them from being proud. The word “mystery” does not necessarily refer to something puzzling or difficult to grasp, but to something that was previously hidden and is now revealed. The mystery here has three elements: (1) at this time in salvation history the majority of Israel has been hardened; (2) during this same time the full number of Gentiles is being saved; and (3) God will do a new work in the future in which he will save all “Israel” ([v. 26](#)).

11:26 in this way all Israel will be saved. Various interpreters have claimed that Paul is speaking of: (1) the salvation of the church of Jesus Christ, both Jews and Gentiles, throughout history; or (2) the saving of a remnant of Jews throughout history; or (3) the salvation of the end-time generation of the Jewish people in the future. The first view is unlikely since throughout [chs. 9-11](#) Israel and Gentiles are distinct ethnic entities. Furthermore, in [11:25](#) Israel refers to ethnic Israel, and it is difficult to see how the referent could suddenly change in [v. 26](#). Finally, [v. 28](#) indicates that ethnic Israel is still distinguished from Gentiles, for “they” in [v. 28](#) clearly refers to ethnic Israel. The third view, that Paul refers to the salvation of Israel at the end of history, seems most likely because: (1) it fits with the promises of God’s future work in [vv. 12](#) and [15](#); (2) it is difficult to see how the salvation of a remnant of Jews all through history would qualify as a mystery; (3) the future salvation of ethnic Israel at the end of history accords with the climactic character of this passage; and (4) it demonstrates finally and fully how God is faithful to fulfill his saving promises to his people ([9:6](#)). “All Israel” does not necessarily refer to every single Jewish person but to a very large number, at least the majority of Jews. **The Deliverer** coming from Zion probably refers to Christ (cf. [1 Thess. 1:10](#)), suggesting that the Jews will be saved near or at the second coming.

11:27 when I take away their sins. The salvation of Israel fits with God’s covenantal promise to save his people and to forgive their sins.

11:28 for your sake. The unbelief of Israel has benefited the Gentiles, i.e., this is the period of history in which Gentiles are being saved, while most of Israel remains in unbelief. But God’s electing promise given to **their forefathers** Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be fulfilled in the future.

11:29 Israel will be saved because God never revokes his saving promises. **Gifts** (Gk. *charisma*) means things freely given by God, and the word can be used to refer to different kinds of gifts. Sometimes the word refers to spiritual gifts for ministry (as in [1:11](#); [12:6](#); [1 Cor. 12:4](#)) and sometimes to the gift of salvation ([Rom. 5:15-16](#); [6:23](#)), but the context here favors yet a third kind of “gifts,” namely, the unique blessings given to Israel which Paul mentioned at the beginning of this long section ([9:4-5](#)). **calling** (Gk. *klēsis*, using the same root as Gk. *eklogē*, “election,” in [11:28](#); also in [9:11](#); [11:7](#)) refers here to calling to salvation (cf. [8:30](#); [9:11](#), [24](#)).

11:30-31 Salvation history is structured to feature God’s great **mercy**. God saved the Gentiles when one would expect only the Jews to be saved, but in the future he will amaze all by his grace again by saving the Jews, so that it will be clear that everyone’s salvation is by **mercy** alone. The final **now** in the text does not mean the promise to the Jews is now fulfilled but that the promise of Jewish salvation could be fulfilled at any time.

1. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: “Romans 11”.

[11:32](#) The word **all** here refers to Jews and Gentiles (all without *distinction*, not all without *exception*). The sin and **disobedience** of both Jews and Gentiles is highlighted, to emphasize God's mercy in saving some among both Jews and Gentiles.

Holman Christian Standard Bible - Study Bible² *Romans 11:25-32*

[11:25-27](#) A **mystery** has been revealed by God: (1) A **partial hardening** has come to Israel; (2) this will continue until a **full number of the Gentiles** come in; and (3) then **all Israel will be saved**. "Israel" is the name for the Jewish people. It is used 70 times in the NT of Jews, Hebrews, or Israelites. It is not used as a title for the church. [Galatians 6:16](#) is not an exception; it refers to saved or godly Jews as "the Israel of God." Here in [verse 26](#), "all Israel" means there will be a conversion of the Hebrew nation. It does not mean that every single Jew living will be saved. Salvation is defined in [verses 26-27](#) as the new **covenant** that the Messiah will inaugurate.

[11:28-32](#) Israel's vocation and gifts are **irrevocable**, so their future salvation is certain. God in His mercy gives grace to the disobedient: both to Gentiles and Jews. Both were so **imprisoned** in their **disobedience** that there was no way to escape except by God's **mercy**.

NLT Life Application Study Bible³ *Romans 11:25-32*

[11:26](#) Some say the phrase "and so all Israel will be saved" means that the majority of Jews in the final generation before Christ's return will turn to Christ for salvation. Others say that Paul is using the term *Israel* to refer to the "spiritual" nation of Israel, which is comprised of Jews and Gentiles who have received salvation through faith in Christ. Thus, "all Israel" (or all believers) will receive God's promised gift of salvation. Still others say that "all Israel" means Israel as a whole will have a role in Christ's Kingdom. The Jews' identity as a people won't be discarded. God chose the nation of Israel, and he has never rejected it. He also chose the church, through Jesus Christ, and he will never reject it either. This does not mean, of course, that all Jews or all church members will be saved. It is possible to be Jewish or to belong to a church without ever responding in faith. But just because some people have rejected Christ does not mean that God stops working with either Israel or the church. He continues to offer salvation freely to all. Still others say that the phrase "and so" means "in this way" or "this is how," referring to the necessity of faith in Christ.

[11:28-32](#) In this passage Paul shows how the Jews and the Gentiles benefit each other. Whenever God shows mercy to one group, the other shares the blessing. In God's original plan, the Jews would be the source of God's blessing to the Gentiles (see [Genesis 12:3](#)). When the Jews neglected this mission, God blessed the Gentiles anyway through the Jewish Messiah. He still maintained his love for the Jews because of his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The privileges and invitation of God given to Israel will never be withdrawn. But someday all faithful Jews will share in God's mercy. God's plans will not be thwarted: He will "have mercy on everyone."

2. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., HCSB Study Bible, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Romans 11".

3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1915-1916.

Life Application Concise New Testament Commentary⁴

Romans 11:25-32

11:25 The temporary stumbling of Israel is part of what Paul calls a **mystery**—the word here means a truth that has been unrevealed up to this point but is now being made known. The mystery reveals, for example, that Israel’s stumbling has always been part of God’s plan. God put Israel aside for a time in order to offer salvation to the Gentiles. Paul reviews this mystery so the Gentiles **will not feel proud and start bragging**. Conceit would be a sign that they were ignorant of God’s master plan that included everyone (see [11:32](#)).

Some of the Jews have hard hearts, but this is only temporary, because it will only be experienced **until the complete number of Gentiles comes to Christ**—that is, when all the elect of the Gentiles have come to salvation (see [Acts 15:14](#)). God knows the size of that number of Gentiles who will be grafted into God’s tree of faith. We only know that the number will be complete. As many will have come in as are going to come in.

11:26-27 This statement, **all Israel will be saved**, has provoked a variety of interpretations. The most widely held are as follows:

- The majority of Jews in the final generation before Christ’s return will turn to Christ for salvation.
- Paul is using the term Israel for the “spiritual” nation of Israel made up of everyone—Jew and Gentile—who has received salvation through faith in Christ. Thus all Israel (or all believers, the church) will receive God’s promised gift of salvation.
- Israel as a whole will have a role in Christ’s Kingdom. Their identity as a people won’t be discarded. God chose the nation of Israel, and he has never rejected it. He also chose the church, through Jesus Christ, and he will never reject it either. This does not mean, of course, that all Jews or all church members will be saved. It is possible to belong to a nation or to an organization without ever responding in faith. But just because some people have rejected Christ does not mean that God stops working with either Israel or the church. He continues to offer salvation freely to all.
- **And so** means “in this way” or “this is how,” referring to the necessity of faith in Christ.

These explanations do not exclude one another, and they all serve to underscore Paul’s clear intention: to demonstrate that God had not rejected Israel. Indeed, Paul believed the nation of Israel would be restored to God. Both Jews and Gentiles will make up the flourishing tree that stands for the Kingdom, as well the brush pile of broken branches prepared for burning that represents those who have rejected God’s gracious offer of forgiveness.

To confirm his statement, Paul quotes from Isaiah, first from [59:20-21](#). Jesus Christ is the **Deliverer who will come from Jerusalem**. For the first and only time in this letter, Paul speaks of the second coming of Christ. At that time, Christ **will turn Israel from all ungodliness** (see also [Psalm 14:7](#); [53:6](#)). God also promises to **take away their sins** (see also [Jeremiah 31:33-34](#)).

4. Barton B. Bruce et al., *Life Application New Testament Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 621-622.

11:28 Paul is still speaking to the Gentiles in his audience ([11:13](#)). In order for God to bring the gospel to them, he had to set the **Jews** aside—as if they were his **enemies** for having rejected the **Good News**. But as far as God’s choice, his election, is concerned, **the Jews are still his chosen people because of his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**. Because God chose those men through whom he would carry out his promises, he will keep his promises to their descendants.

11:29 The privileges and invitation given to Israel **can never be withdrawn**. God will not take back his **gifts** or withdraw his **call**. He will keep his promises. While God will not take back what he has offered, we are certainly able to reject it. Paul is making an application from God’s characteristic faithfulness to the Jews that anyone can rely on. God will do what he promises.

11:30 The **Gentiles were rebels** before they knew God, but they received God’s mercy and offer of salvation because of Israel’s disobedience. Having received from God something that they had lacked previously, they could expect to keep on enjoying God’s mercy. By the same logic, however, the Jews could also expect God to be consistent with his promises, even though they had, for a time, rejected his mercy.

11:31 From Paul’s time onward, Israel has been rebellious to God because of their refusal to accept salvation in Christ. Though they began with an advantage due to God’s gracious choice of them as his people, by being disobedient, the Jews had proved themselves equally needing God’s mercy. And Israel will receive mercy because as soon as all the elect of the Gentiles have come (see [11:25](#)), then God’s **mercy** will again be directed to Israel.

In these verses, Paul shows how the Jews and the Gentiles benefit each other. Whenever God shows mercy to one group, the other shares the blessing. In God’s original plan, the Jews would be the source of God’s blessing to the Gentiles (see [Genesis 12:3](#)). When the Jews neglected this mission, God blessed the Gentiles anyway through the Jewish Messiah. He still maintained his love for the Jews because of his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But someday the faithful Jews will share in God’s mercy.

11:32 When Adam sinned, all humanity sinned with him ([5:19](#)). We are all sinners ([3:23](#)). When people choose to follow their own passion and desires, they are **imprisoned** in their **disobedience**. People who deliberately choose to disobey God imprison themselves. It is those who understand that they have been saying no to God who are in the best position to say yes to him. God then is willing to **have mercy** on all who come to him. For a beautiful picture of Jews and Gentiles experiencing rich blessings, see [Isaiah 60](#).

Study and Discussion Questions



All Israel Will Be Saved - [Romans 11:25-32](#)

Topics: [Covenant](#), [Disobedience](#), [God](#), [Hardheartedness](#), [Mercy](#), [Salvation](#), [Sin](#)

Open It

1. What would it take to get you to knowingly break an important promise you made?
2. *How can a bad situation bring good results?

Explore It

3. To what mystery did Paul refer? ([11:25](#))
4. How had Israel responded to the message Paul preached? ([11:25](#))
5. *When would Israel's period of hardening end? ([11:25](#))
6. What will eventually happen to Israel? ([11:26](#))
7. *What promise has God made to Israel? ([11:26-27](#))
8. In what two contrasting ways were the Jews described by Paul? ([11:28-29](#))
9. What did Paul say about God's promises? ([11:29](#))
10. *What has been the good result of the disobedience and unbelief of the Jews? ([11:30](#))
11. How is God responding to the unbelief of the Jews? ([11:31](#))
12. For what reason has God allowed all people to be disobedient? ([11:32](#))

Get It

13. What makes God's plan of salvation a mystery?
14. *What does this passage reveal about God's character?
15. How will "all Israel" be saved?
16. *How does our commitment to God affect His dependability and trustworthiness?
17. When has God shown you mercy despite your disobedience?
18. What promises of God can help us deal with the difficult circumstances of our lives?

Apply It

19. *Which of God's promises do you need to focus on and memorize this week?
20. What can you do this week to show God's unique love to someone who has turned away from Him?