

THE CALLOUS ON ISRAEL'S HEART IS NOT FINAL — THERE IS TO BE A RESTORATION ROMANS 11:11–16

Introduction

The callous on a man's heart does not have to be final. Every man can repent and turn to Christ and be restored to God. This is the message of this passage. The callous on Israel's heart is not final. There is to be a restoration of Israel. Many in Israel are going to return to God and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

- I. Proof 1: God has counteracted Israel's stumbling over Christ (vv. 11-12).
- II. Proof 2: Paul tried to stir the Jews to be saved (vv. 13-15).
- III. Proof 3: the forefathers, that is, the patriarchs, passed down a heritage of holiness (v. 16).

I. Romans 11:11–12 Israel, Restoration — God, Sovereignty

Proof one is that God has counteracted Israel's stumbling over Christ.

=> Israel has stumbled over Christ (see *Judgement, Stumbling Stone, and Jesus Christ — Name, Title*, Mt. 21:44).

=> Has Israel stumbled that they should fall?

The contrast between stumble and fall is devastating. The idea is that of a permanent and final fall — spiritually. Is Israel's problem with Christ permanent and final? Will Israel never accept God's Son, Jesus Christ, as the true Messiah? Is the spiritual fall of Israel to be forever?

Paul's response is forceful: God forbid! Not at all! Perish the thought! Let it never be! Such a thing is impossible in God's plan for the world. God has overruled Israel's stumble over Christ in three glorious ways.

1. God has opened the door of salvation to the whole world. The Lord's messengers went to Israel first, but Israel did not want to hear that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God Himself. Very few received the gospel. In fact, so many rejected the message that it can be said that Israel, the nation as a whole, has stumbled over Christ. Israel, the Jews...
 - have shut their eyes, lest they should see Christ (v. 8).
 - have closed their ears, lest they should hear Christ (v. 8).
 - have set themselves to bitterly oppose Christ (1 Th. 2:15-16).

God had no other choice but to do the logical thing. The glorious message of His love and of His Son was at stake; therefore, God sent His messengers throughout the

world (the Gentile world) in search of any person who would receive the message of His Son. God did what the Jews had always failed to do; God threw open the door of salvation to the whole world. (See *Israel*, Mt. 21:43.)

Acts 13:46 *Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles."*

Acts 28:27-28 *"For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them. Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"*

Mat 22:8-9 *"Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.'"*

Luke 14:21-24 *"The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.' 'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.' Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"*

Thought 1. Note two provoking thoughts.

- 1) Think how wonderful it would have been if the Jews had accepted Jesus Christ and had become God's missionary force to carry the message of Christ to the world! Would the world have been reached by now? It has been two thousand years since Christ came to earth, and the world still has not been reached with the gospel. If the Jews had accepted Christ, would the task now be complete? How many more people would have been saved?
- 2) Think how wonderful it would be if more of us (the Gentiles) would accept Christ! If we would dedicate our lives more sacrificially to carry God's message of salvation to the world, how many more people would be saved and delivered from death?

Thought 2. Note how God "works for the good of the world." He took Israel's rejection of His Son and enriched the world. Why? Because God has determined that His Son Jesus Christ shall have many brothers who will worship and serve Him throughout all eternity. Therefore, if a people rejects the message of His Son, God will work it out to send the message to another people (see Rom. 8:28-29).

2. God stirs the Jews to be restored. God has not forsaken the Jews. The door of salvation is open to them as well as to the Gentiles. The Jews can look at true

Christian believers and see the holiness, love, joy and peace of their lives; and the Jews can be stirred to receive Christ. In fact, this is the very point of the present passage. God sees to it that some Jews are “made envious,” that is, stirred to receive Christ and the glorious life of salvation which He offers.

John 16:7-11 *“But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me: in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.”*

Luke 24:47 *“And repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”*

Rom 1:16 *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.*

Gal 3:27-28 *For all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

3. God assures the glorious restoration of Israel and rich period for the whole earth. Note the sharp contrast...

- between “falling beyond recovery” and “riches.”
- between “loss” and “riches.”

The word “loss” (hettema) means utter loss, defeat and injury. It means that Israel became impoverished spiritually. Israel was spiritually injured and defeated; the Jewish people lost the blessings of salvation. Now...

- if the spiritual fall of Israel led to the riches of salvation being carried to the world...
- if the spiritual loss of Israel led to the riches of salvation being carried to the Gentiles...

...how much more shall the fullness (the restoration of Israel) bring the blessings of God to earth?

Note the word “fullness” (pleroma), which means completion or that which is filled. The idea is that the day is coming when God's plan and purpose for Israel will be completed and perfectly fulfilled. That day, the day of Israel's restoration, will cause even a greater blessing to spread out across the world.

Thought 1. The spread of the gospel has had an enormous impact upon the world.

- => It has liberated millions from sin and shame.
- => It has saved millions from death and hell.
- => It has assured millions of life eternal with God.
- => It has liberated women and children from slavery.
- => It has proclaimed morality and purity worldwide.
- => It has stirred justice and the enactment of just laws among men.

However, when Israel is restored and large numbers of Jews begin to turn to Christ, then the world will experience unprecedented blessings from the hand of God. God promises such blessings to the world.

The point is clear: God has overruled and is going to continue overruling Israel's stumble and fall over Christ.

- => More and more Gentiles are going to be saved. The uttermost part of the earth is going to hear the gospel.

Mat 24:14 *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”*

- => More and more Jews are going to be stirred to accept Christ and to be restored to God.
- => A glorious restoration of Israel is going to take place. Jews by the teeming thousands are going to turn to Christ someday out in the future. So many will turn to Christ that it can be said that the nation Israel has been restored. And when that day comes, the whole earth will be greatly blessed, blessed more fully than ever before.

Rom 11:25-26 *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. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.”*

Jer 24:7 *I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.*

II. Romans 11:13–15 Paul's Attempt, Restoration of Israel

Proof two is Paul's attempt to stir the Jews to be saved. Paul was God's primary minister to the Gentiles in the first century. Paul magnified the ministry and gloried in God's call, and he stressed the fact every chance he could. Why? Paul had two purposes.

1. He wanted to arouse the Jews to envy; that is, he wanted to stir them to look at Christ, and to see what Christ had done for the Gentiles. He wanted to stir men to look at the lives of believers and to see the wonderful change Christ had wrought. Thereby, Paul hoped that some Jews would be saved.
2. Paul wanted to hasten the day for Israel's restoration. He knew there was to be a restoration; therefore, he knew that every time he was able to reach a Jew for Christ,

the callous on Israel's heart would soften a little more. The more he could soften the callous, the sooner the restoration would take place. Note the question of Paul:

Rom 11:15 *For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?*

a. The *reconciliation* of the world has a twofold meaning. It means...

- that all men, both Jew and Gentile can now be reconciled to God. All men can now have peace with God and possess the peace of God (see *Peace*, Rom. 5:1; *Reconciliation*, Rom 5:10; Jn. 14:27).

Rom 5:10 *For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!*

2 Cor 5:17-18 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.*

Col 1:20 *And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

- that all men, both Jew and Gentile, can now be reconciled to each other (see Eph. 2:13-18).

Eph 2:16 *And in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.*

b. Paul believed strongly in the restoration of Israel. The very fact that he asked the question indicates his belief. He firmly expected Israel to be restored, and he expected their restoration to bring such a great revival to earth that it would be like the world moving to "life from the dead."

c. The phrase "life from the dead" is interpreted several ways.

=> Some say it refers to the resurrection of the dead, to the climax of human history when Jesus Christ shall return to deliver the whole creation from corruption and to rule and reign over the world (see Rom. 8:21). This, of course, would mean that believers are not resurrected until the restoration of the Jews to God.

=> Others say it is merely figurative language. When the Jews are restored, it will be like a resurrection, like gaining life from the dead.

Whatever the interpretation, the restoration of Israel will be a most glorious event, an event so glorious that it will be like a true resurrection. It will lead to a new world, a world of righteousness that will benefit all involved. The scene is that the most glorious blessings will be poured out upon the whole world and everyone in it.

Jer 24:7 *I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.*

Ezek 37:10 *So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet — a vast army.*

Luke 15:24 *'For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.*

Rom 8:11 *And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.*

Eph 1:18 *I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.*

Eph 2:4-7 *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

1 Tim 1:14 *The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.*

III. Romans 11:16 A Heritage of Holiness

Proof three is that Israel's forefathers, that is, the patriarchs, passed down a heritage of holiness. This is an extremely important verse in dealing with the restoration of Israel. God gives two pictures to show that Israel can never be totally or finally rejected. Both pictures have to do with the first-fruits.

=> The Jew always dedicated the first fruit of his harvest to God. He gave the first part to God and by giving the first part, the man was saying to God that he was dedicating all of his food to God. It was not necessary to offer every mouthful to God. The offering of the first part sanctified the whole.

=> The second picture is that of a little tree being planted and the sapling being offered to God. Every branch thereafter was looked upon as being sacred to God. It was not necessary to dedicate each branch separately.

What Paul is saying is that the root, the first part, refers to the patriarchs, that is, the fathers of Israel. Israel by merit of their patriarchs, their fathers, holds a very special place in God's heart. The whole nation benefits from the dedicated lives of Abraham and the other godly fathers. The whole nation (masses of them) will be restored and saved, brought back to God because of the godliness of their forefathers and because of God's promise to the forefathers (see v. 25).

Note this: to call Israel a holy nation does not mean that the Jewish people live holy lives in the sight of God. Scripture is not talking about practical, day-to-day holiness.

There have been few Jews — just as there have always been few Gentiles — who have lived holy lives. But Israel was *initially* chosen by God to be His witness upon earth: chosen to be His *federal nation* or His *representative nation* to bear testimony for Him. The first fathers of the nation believed God and lived lives of faith, and a few Jews have continued to follow God down through the generations of every century. God very clearly says that because of the holiness of these few, He cares for the nation as a whole — for the whole lump. What this means is this: because of the holy lives of the few, God looks with favour upon the nation. It does not mean that He saves everyone in the nation; but rather, He blesses the nation, all those who live around the followers of God. Those who live holy lives bring godly blessings upon all who surround them and who succeed from them. Many of Israel will be blessed by God and restored because of the nation's godly patriarchs.

Thought 1. Note the influence of godly parents, forefathers and nations upon children and succeeding generations. It is important for every parent and generation to live godly lives.

Exo 34:6-7 *And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”* (see Lev.14:18)

2 Kng 17:15 *They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their fathers and the warnings he had given them. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the Lord had ordered them, “Do not do as they do,” and they did the things the Lord had forbidden them to do.*

Job 21:19 *It is said, ‘God stores up a man’s punishment for his sons.’ Let him repay the man himself, so that he will know it!*

Jer 32:18-19 *You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the fathers’ sins into the laps of their children after them. O great and powerful God, whose name is the Lord Almighty, great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve.*

Lam 5:7 *Our fathers sinned and are no more, and we bear their punishment.*

Deu 12:30 *And after they have been destroyed before you, be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, “How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same.”*

Mat 23:3 *“So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.”*

Thought 2. Note the influence of godly men upon nations.

Exo 19:6 “‘You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

Rom 11:28 *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.*

Deu 4:37 *Because he loved your forefathers and chose their descendants after them, he brought you out of Egypt by his Presence and his great strength.*

However, we must always remember that the people of a nation can be restored to God only through repentance, only by turning from sin back to God.

Lev 26:40-42 *“But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their fathers — their treachery against me and their hostility toward me, which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies — then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin, I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land.” ■*

THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL AND ITS SURETY ROMANS 11:25–36

Introduction

Israel's history is a surety. God loves man with an infinite love, and God's love is unchangeable. Therefore, any person can be restored to God if the person will call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and ask Christ to save him. This is clearly seen in the history of Israel. Israel's restoration is a surety and, as such, stands as a prime example of the unchangeable love of God toward man.

- I. Surety 1: God's great revelation about the Jews (vv. 25-26).
- II. Surety 2: the promise of Scripture — God's Deliverer, Jesus Christ, shall turn Israel and take away their sins (vv. 26-27).
- III. Surety 3: God's pleasure with Israel's forefathers (vv. 28-29).
- IV. Surety 4: the believer's mercy and witness to the Jews (vv. 30-31).
- V. Surety 5: God's holiness and mercy (v. 32).
- VI. Surety 6: God's glorious plan for the world (vv. 33-36).

I. *Romans 11:25–26 The Restoration of Israel*

The first surety is God's great revelation about Israel. The revelation comes from Paul. Note three significant facts.

1. The revelation had been an unknown mystery until Paul. The word "mystery" (musterion) in the Bible is not used as most men use the word, as something mysterious or difficult to understand. *A Biblical mystery means that...*
 - something that was unknown is now revealed.
 - something that was hidden is now made known.
 - something that was a secret is now told.

The future of Israel is now revealed and made known to men. Note exactly why God revealed the future of Israel: that we not be ignorant of Israel's future, and that we not be wise in our own conceits or imaginations. This last reason can mean two things.

- => Gentiles become guilty of looking down upon the Jews because the Jews are so different from the rest of us. They have rejected Jesus Christ and are opposed to Christianity to such a degree that they remain almost exclusively among themselves. Gentiles face the danger of becoming puffed up, of thinking that they are more acceptable to God because they look with favour upon Jesus Christ and are more open in professing Him. There is the danger of being prideful and arrogant, of lording it over the Jews.
- => A Gentile, especially a Gentile believer, can begin to think that his idea of Israel's destiny is the correct idea and that he and the followers of his position are the persons
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who have a full understanding of the truth. All other understandings are incorrect. There is the danger of becoming “conceited.”

2. Israel’s blindness is only partial, only “in part.” There were Jewish believers who followed Christ in His day and there have been Jewish believers who have followed Christ down through the centuries. The blindness and hardness of Israel to the gospel is not total; it is only partial. Granted, just as Scripture says, so many Jews have rejected and still do reject Christ that it is as though all *Israel as a nation* has stumbled and fallen over Him (see vv. 8-9). However, there have been and always will be some Jews who believe. Israel’s blindness is only partial.
3. Israel’s blindness is only temporary. Two statements clearly show this.
 - a. Israel’s blindness is only “until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.” Note a significant point. *It does not matter how a person interprets this clause*, when the full number of the Gentiles is completed, *Israel’s blindness will be removed* according to Scripture. Just what “the full number of the Gentiles” means is open to different interpretations, but it does not change what is to happen to Israel. It only affects *when* the blindness is to be removed from Israel. Israel’s blindness is to continue *only* until the full number of the Gentiles comes. Now what does this event mean? The full number of the Gentiles can mean...
 - a certain number of Gentile converts are to be saved, to fill up the “broken off branches of Israel” (v. 17-21).
 - the end of the Gentile age, a time when the emphasis of salvation will no longer be upon the Gentiles, but upon the Jews.
 - the end of the Gentile age, a time when God will rapture the church (all believers) and cause a revival among the Jews who will then become the primary witnesses for Him.

The point is worth repeating. No matter what the phrase “the full number of the Gentiles” means, it does not change the event of Israel’s revival. The blindness of Israel will be removed.

- b. “All Israel will be saved.” The fact could be stated no clearer:

=> Israel’s blindness is only temporary.

=> The restoration of Israel is a surety.

=> Israel shall experience a revival.

=> Israel shall turn to God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thought 1. There is hope for every person. Note two critical facts:

- 1) A person’s blindness to the Lord Jesus Christ is only partial. As long as a person is alive, he can still turn to Christ.

- 2) A person's blindness is temporary *only* if the person turns to the Lord Jesus Christ. Unless a person believes and commits his life to Christ, his blindness becomes permanent, and he is lost forever.

John 3:19 *This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.*

Col 1:13-14 *For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

2 Tim 1:10 *But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

1 John 1:5-7 *This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light: in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

ROMANS 11: 25–26 RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

*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. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob." **Romans 11: 25–26***

There are many reasons for taking this passage at its face value, that is, as a prediction of the Jewish people's conversion as a nation.

1. The whole context favours this view. The conversion of the Jews as a probable event has been described in the plainest and simplest of terms.
2. The nation was rejected, not as individuals but as a community or nation. Therefore, it is only natural to say that when God speaks of a restoration, He is speaking not only of individuals being restored, but of the community or nation as being restored (v. 11, 15).
3. Paul speaks of a great event, something that will attract universal attention.
4. Paul says this is a "mystery." The gradual conversion of a few Jews would be no mystery. When speaking of the mystery of the Gentiles (Eph. 1:9; 3:4), Paul is speaking of the Gentiles as a community being admitted into the church of God. Therefore, it is only natural to assume that when Paul speaks of the mystery of the Jews, he is speaking of a great event, of a great movement of Jews into Christ.

5. The words “all Israel” (v. 26) cannot mean the spiritual Israel. Such an interpretation would do violence to the use of the word “Israel” throughout this whole context. It simply means Israel as a nation, as a community of people. This is also clear from the warnings that are given throughout this passage to both Gentile and Jew.

However, “all Israel” looks at the nation en masse. It does not necessarily have to mean every single individual. Note a very significant fact: when the nation became hardened, Scripture speaks of the nation, that is, of all Israel being rejected. However, not every single person was rejected. There were a few individuals who still believed and who comprised a remnant (see Rom. 11:1-10). Every single individual was not lost, so the same is probably true when the nation is restored. There will be a large number of Jews who will become open and tender to the gospel, but not necessarily every individual. In one simple statement: Israel will be open to the gospel just as the Gentiles are open to the gospel. Many Jews will begin to be saved just as many Gentiles are now saved.

***Deu 30:3** Then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you.*

***Isa 1:26** “I will restore your judges as in days of old, your counsellors as at the beginning. Afterward you will be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City.”*

***Isa 11:12** He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth.*

***Isa 27:13** And in that day a great trumpet will sound. Those who were perishing in Assyria and those who were exiled in Egypt will come and worship the Lord on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.*

***Isa 33:20** Look upon Zion, the city of our festivals; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a peaceful abode, a tent that will not be moved; its stakes will never be pulled up, nor any of its ropes broken.*

***Isa 40:2** Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.*

***Isa 49:22** This is what the Sovereign Lord says: “See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders.”*

***Isa 60:10** “Foreigners will rebuild your walls, and their kings will serve you. Though in anger I struck you, in favour I will show you compassion.”*

***Jer 23:3** “I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number.”*

Jer 24:6-7 *My eyes will watch over them for their good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not uproot them. I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart. (see Jer. 31:7-8)*

Ezek 14:22 *Yet there will be some survivors — sons and daughters who will be brought out of it. They will come to you, and when you see their conduct and their actions, you will be consoled regarding the disaster I have brought upon Jerusalem — every disaster I have brought upon it.*

Ezek 20:40 *For on my holy mountain, the high mountain of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord, there in the land the entire house of Israel will serve me, and there I will accept them. There I will require your offerings and your choice gifts, along with all your holy sacrifices.*

Ezek 36:8 *“But you, O mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home.”*

Ezek 37:10 *So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet — a vast army.*

Micah 2:12 *“I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob; I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel. I will bring them together like sheep in a pen, like a flock in its pasture; the place will throng with people.”*

Zep 2:9 *“Therefore, as surely as I live,” declares the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, “surely Moab will become like Sodom, the Ammonites like Gomorrah — a place of weeds and salt pits, a wasteland forever. The remnant of my people will plunder them; the survivors of my nation will inherit their land.”*

Zec 1:17 *“Proclaim further: This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘My towns will again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem.’”*

Zec 10:6 *“I will strengthen the house of Judah and save the house of Joseph. I will restore them because I have compassion on them. They will be as though I had not rejected them, for I am the Lord their God and I will answer them.”*

Zec 14:11 *It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure.*

Mal 3:4 *And the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years. □*

II. **Romans 11:26–27** *Jesus Christ's Restoration of Israel*

The second surety is the promise of Scripture. God's great Deliverer, Jesus Christ Himself, shall turn Israel. Scripture gives a glimpse into the future of Israel's restoration in this verse, but note that it is only a glimpse. Just how Israel will be restored is not discussed in this passage. Only two major things are given.

1. Some great manifestation of Christ the Deliverer will cause Israel to turn to the gospel.

Mat 23:39 *"For I tell you, [Israel] you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"*

Acts 3:19-21 *Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you [Israel] — even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.*

Rom 11:25 *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.*

2 Cor 3:14-16 *But their minds [Israel] were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.*

Psa 14:7 *Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the Lord restores the fortunes of his people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!*

Isa 59:20-21 *"The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins," declares the Lord. "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.*

Isa 27:9 *By this, then, will Jacob's guilt be atoned for, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: When he makes all the altar stones to be like limestones crushed to pieces, no Asherah poles or incense altars will be left standing.*

Jer 31:34 *"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*

Hosea 3:4-5 *For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or idol. Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last days.*

Zec 12:10 *"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have*

pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a first-born son.”

2. The great Deliverer, Jesus Christ, will do two things for Israel.
 - a. Jesus Christ will turn away godlessness from Israel (see Isa. 27:9).
 - b. Jesus Christ will fulfil God’s covenant with Israel: He will take away their sins (see Isa. 59:21; 27:9).

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 5:31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Saviour that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

Acts 13:38 “Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.”

Eph 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.

Isa 43:25 “I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.”

Isa 44:22 “I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you.”

Isa 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

III. Romans 11:28–29 God’s Promise to the Patriarchs

The third surety is God’s pleasure with Israel’s forefathers or patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).

1. The statement “they [the Jews] are enemies on your account” sounds as though God predestined Israel’s rejection. However, God does not cause sin (Jas. 1:13-14); God does not cause people to reject His Son and His will. What the statement means is this: the word “enemy” (*echthroi*) has both an active and passive meaning. It means either hostile or hated by, and it means either hating or being hated. It is possible that in this particular passage it is to be read both ways. The Jews were hostile to God; they had refused the offer of God’s righteousness in Jesus Christ, and they had refused to be the missionary force for God’s Son. Therefore, they had aroused God’s displeasure. They hated God; consequently, God was displeased with them.

Note that God did what He had to do. He turned to the Gentiles. Israel had refused to be the missionary force for God’s Son, so God had to turn to the Gentiles. Among the Gentiles, God found a receptive people. The Gentiles accepted the offer of God’s righteousness in Jesus Christ, and they have become the missionary force for Christ

to the world. It is critical to remember something, however: this does not mean that every Gentile is saved. Most are not, but a fair number of them have accepted and still do accept Jesus Christ. We must remember this: in this passage God is speaking *nationally, not individually*.

- => A few Jews do accept Christ as the Messiah, but the number is small. The number is so small that God can say that Israel as a nation has rejected Christ.
- => A far greater number of Gentiles accept Christ as their Saviour. However, as is clearly evidenced by the unholy lives of most Gentiles, the majority reject Christ; but the number who do accept Him is fairly large. It is large enough for God to say that the Gentiles as a *community* do accept His offer of salvation in Christ.

Thought 1. The point is that God is speaking *nationally, not individually*. And we must remember this, for it is absolutely essential for everyone to make a *personal decision* to receive Christ and to follow Him by living a pure life.

Titus 2:11-14 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

2. The statement “they [the Jews] are loved on account of the patriarchs” shows that God still loves Israel. As a people they are still very precious to Him. How can this be when they have been so hostile to God’s Son, Jesus Christ, and against the missionary force of God’s Son? There are two reasons why God still loves Israel.
 - a. The forefathers or patriarchs of Israel were a godly people, a people of unusual faith in God. (See Rom. 11:16; also see *Israel, Seed of Abraham*, Rom. 4:1-25.) There were people such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Deborah, Ruth, Elijah — the list could go on and on. As Scripture says:

Heb 11:32-38 *And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated — the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.*

Such godly men and women knew God — knew Him personally and intimately — and God would never forget a people who loved Him so greatly. Keep this in mind as well: godly people are a praying people, a people who pray for their families and neighbours, for their nation and world. And God hears and answers the prayers of His people. God would never turn His back upon Israel for this reason alone.

- b. There is a second reason why God still loves Israel: God Himself is *unchangeable in His gifts and calling*. God called and promised some very special gifts to the patriarchs, the forefathers of Israel, and God is unchangeable; therefore...

- every purpose for which God called Israel shall be fulfilled in the lives of many Jews.
- every gift God promised Israel shall be given to many Jews.

The point is striking. God does not change His mind. He is constant, immutable, unchangeable. He shall perfectly fulfil His calling and gifts to Israel.

Psa 33:11 But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

Psa 102:27 But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

Psa 135:13 Your name, O Lord, endures forever, your renown, O Lord, through all generations.

Psa 145:13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.

Mal 3:6 “I the Lord do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.”

Heb 1:12 “You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.”

Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Rev 1:8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

IV. Romans 11: 30—31 Mercy and Witness of Believers

The fourth surety is the believer’s mercy and witness to the Jews. These two verses are speaking historically. Very simply, history shall be repeated.

=> In times past — before Christ ever came — the Gentiles did not know and obey God, but the Jews did.

=> Eventually, the Jews rejected God which is ultimately seen in their killing God’s Son, Jesus Christ. They, too, failed to believe (obey God).

=> Therefore, God turned to the Gentiles.

Now note: if we came to know God through the unbelief of the Jews, how much more shall the Jews be shown mercy through the mercy of the Gentiles! To word the matter another way...

- if mercy resulted from unbelief, how much more shall mercy result from mercy?
- if mercy to the Gentiles came through the unbelief of the Jews, how much more shall mercy to the Jews come through the mercy of the Gentiles?

The point seems to be this: we truly know the mercy of God through Jesus Christ our Lord; therefore, we want the world to experience the same mercy and forgiveness of sins. In particular, we feel indebted to the Jews, the people through whom God gave us His Word, His Son, and His promises. Therefore, Scripture predicts that the evangelistic efforts to reach the Jews will someday bear fruit. The Jews will be reached by the mercy of God; they shall believe and obey Jesus Christ as Lord. The Jews shall be restored into the favour of God.

Thought 1. Every believer who knows the mercy of God should share the mercy of God. God hates exclusiveness, prejudice, partiality. The world desperately needs the gospel, the Jew as well as the Gentile, and God demands that His mercy be shared with the world.

John 20:21 *Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."*

2 Cor 5:19-20 *That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

1 John 1:3 *We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*

V. Romans 11:32 Mercy and Holiness of God

The fifth surety is God's holiness and mercy. The word "bound" (sunekleisen) means to shut up in a place, to close up, to lock up. This is an unusual idea: God has taken men, both Jews and Gentiles, and shut them up to disobedience (apeitheian). This is the judicial judgment of God (see *Judicial Blindness and Rejection*, Rom. 11:7-10; Rom. 1:24; *Unbelief, Judicial Judgement*, Jn. 12:39-41). It is the picture of God using sin and events for good. God takes sin and works it out for the good of the world. Man has chosen sin, choosing to go his own way in life, so God allows man to do his own thing. God locks man up in his own world of selfishness, allowing man to roam around in his world of sin. Why? So that man's true nature of sinfulness will be clearly seen, and thereby cause the honest and thinking man to seek God. God wishes and will have mercy upon all, both Jew and Gentile; but before men can come to God, they must confess two things:

=> that they are sinful and dying creatures in desperate need of God.

=> that God exists and that He will have mercy upon the person who diligently seeks Him.

Now note: all men, both Jew and Gentile, are shut up in their world of sin. Why? That God may have mercy upon both. The holiness and love of God assures that the Jews will be saved and restored to the mercy of God. All that is needed is for the Jews to begin seeking God. God will have mercy upon any who genuinely seek Him.

Heb 11:6 *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

Deu 4:29 *But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.*

2 Chr 7:14 *If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

Psa 103:17 *But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children.*

Prov 8:7 *My mouth speaks what is true, for my lips detest wickedness.*

Jer 29:13 *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

Lam 3:22 *Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassion never fail.*

Joel 2:13 *Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.*

Micah 7:18 *Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.*

VI. Romans 11:33–36 God's Glorious Plan for the World

The sixth surety is God's glorious plan for the world. Note four points.

1. God's glorious plan for the world involves four great acts of God.
 - a. His infinite wisdom and knowledge: knowing how to do everything perfectly; knowing how to create and arrange, order and govern everything so that all things work out perfectly. Note how God's wisdom and knowledge are said to be deep and rich: "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God." God's wisdom and knowledge are so deep and rich...
 - That angels desire to look into them (1 Pet. 1:13).
 - That they are infinite (Eph. 3:18).

- That they are too wonderful for man (Psa. 139:6. This one verse alone shows just how great God's mercy is toward us.)
 - that they include thoughts more numerous than the grains of sand in the world (Psa. 139:17-18).
- b. His infinite judgments and ways: His judgment in planning and deciding everything, and His ways in executing His purposes and decisions. Note that His judgment and ways are said to be unsearchable and past finding out.

=> Secret things belong to God (Dut. 29:29).

=> God is glorified by His infinite judgments and ways (Pr. 25:2).

=> The great things of God are unsearchable and without number (Job 5:9; 9:10).

=> Man cannot discover God by searching (Job 11:7).

=> There is no searching of God's understanding (Isa. 40:28).

2. No man can grasp God's plan. No man can know the mind of the Lord; no man can be a counsellor to God. Note two significant points.

- a. No man can grasp God's plan. Scripture makes this abundantly clear.

1 Tim 6:16 *[Jesus Christ] who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever. Amen.*

Job 11:7 *"Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?"*

Eccl 3:11 *He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*

- b. Believers do, however, *have the mind of Christ*. This does not mean that believers understand God and His ways perfectly, but it does mean that God reveals Himself and the truth to believers — enough of Himself and His ways to save them from sin, death, judgment and hell.

1 Cor 2:16 *"For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

1 Cor 2:12 *We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.*

John 7:16-17 *Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own."*

John 8:31-32 *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

John 17:3 “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

Col 1:9-10 We have not stopped praying for you...that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

Hosea 6:3 “Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth.”

3. No man can earn God's gift. Note two facts about this verse.
- a. No man can put God in debt to him. No man can give anything to God and claim that God owes him something in return. God owes man nothing. Man has rejected and rebelled against following God, choosing to go his own way. Man is committing high treason against God. Man does not deserve nor can he earn any favour from God. If man is to receive a favour from God, God has to freely give the favour.

Mat 7:22-23 “Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”

Gal 2:16 Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

Eph 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.

Titus 3:4-5 But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

- b. Man's depravity should silence his boasting. It does not, but it should (see Rom. 3:19-20.)
4. God alone is the source, the mean, and the end of all things. Therefore, God is to be glorified forever and ever.
- => All things are *from God*: all things were created by and find their source in God.
- => All things are *through God*: all things come through His wisdom and knowledge, His judgments and ways.
- => All things are *to God*: all things exist for God, for His goodness and pleasure.

Rev 4:11 “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

Psa 22:23 *You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honour him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!*

Psa 145:10 *All you have made will praise you, O Lord; your saints will extol you.*

1 Cor 6:20 *You were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.*

John 15:8 *“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” ■*