

## The Mystery of Election: Objects of Mercy

### Romans 11:16-36

Please turn with me to Romans, chapter 11. We will be looking at verses 16 to 36 and finish this 11th chapter. We begin reading in verse sixteen.

Verses 16-18: "Now if the first-fruit be holy, the lump also; and if the root be holy, the branches also. Now if some of the branches have been broken out, and thou, being a wild olive tree, hast been grafted in amongst them, and hast become a fellow-partaker of the root and of the fatness of the olive tree, boast not against the branches; but if thou boast, it is not thou bearest the root, but the root thee."

Verses 19-21: "Thou wilt say then, The branches have been broken out in order that I might be grafted in. Right: they have been broken out through unbelief, and thou standest through faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: if God indeed has not spared the natural branches; lest it might be he spare not thee either."

Verses 22-23: "Behold then the goodness and severity of God: upon them who have fallen, severity; upon thee goodness of God, if thou shalt abide in goodness, since otherwise thou also wilt be cut away. And they too, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able again to graft them in."

Verse 24: "For if thou hast been cut out of the olive tree wild by nature, and, contrary to nature, hast been grafted into the good olive tree, how much rather shall they, who are according to nature be grafted into their own olive tree?"

Verses 25-27: "For I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, that ye may not be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the nations be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved. According as it is written, The deliverer shall come out of Zion; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant from me to them, when I shall have taken away their sins."

Verses 28-32: "As regards the glad tidings, they are enemies on your account; but as regards election, beloved on account of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are not subject to repentance. For as indeed ye also once have not believed in God, but now have been objects of mercy through the unbelief of these; so these also have now not believed in your mercy, in order that they also may be objects of mercy. For God hath shut up together all in unbelief, in order that he might shew mercy to all."

Verses 33-36: "O depth of riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable his judgments, and untraceable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor? or who has first given to him, and it shall be rendered to him? For of him, and through him, and for him are all things: to him be glory for ever. Amen."

*Lord, we commit these words to You, words that may be difficult for us to comprehend and understand. We pray this morning for the spirit of wisdom in revelation, in full*

*knowledge of Him. Lord, we know it is You alone that have the words of eternal life. We agree with Peter, to whom shall we go? Lord, would You speak again to us, open to us the mysteries of Your word, that we may know those wonderful ways of Yours? In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## Introduction

Well, as you know, we have been going through Romans. We are now concluding the second main section of Romans, with these verses Romans 11: 16-36.

### Structure of Romans

As I have mentioned to you before, Romans can be easily divided into three parts. Most people agree with this, although they may have different ways of explaining it. But chapters one through eight are the mighty Works of God, unimaginable, mighty works. Justification: you are righteous in Christ Jesus. Sanctification: you are holy in Christ Jesus. You are holy and being made holy in Christ Jesus. Glorification: in the end, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. We are being transformed into His image.

Then we think of the second part that we are on now, the Ways of God, the wondrous ways of God. Do you remember Isaiah when he recorded that wonderful verse? It is Isaiah 55:8-9, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Oh, what wondrous ways of God. They are all in mercy. And that is what we want to focus on.

Then later we will go to the last section, chapters 12 through 16, which I call the perfect Will of God, the practical, the manifest will of God in a people. So today we are going to finish out the Mystery of Election: Objects of Mercy. That is an important phrase. I hope you noticed it when you read these verses, the mystery of election, objects of mercy.

### Outline

We will break it down into four areas. I hope this will help.

First of all, None Can Boast. We heard a little bit about that this morning in our time at the Lord's table; we cannot boast in anything but Him. This is verses 16 to 21.

Secondly, The Goodness and Severity of God. They are grouped together in Paul's revelation of this mystery of election. That is verses 22 to 24.

Then we see in verses 25 to 32, that All are Objects of Mercy. That is Paul's main point in this latter part of chapter 11.

Finally, we see the only response that we should have, Exultant Worship Our Only Response. That is verses 33 to 36.

Well, may the Lord help us as we go through these things and cause us to see more of His wonderful ways.

### **None Can Boast**

First, none can boast. One thing is clear when you read this: for the children of God, all boasting is eliminated.

Now, we are either a Jew or we are of the nations, which means a Gentile; my author uses nations, your Bible may use Gentiles. But whether you are a Jew or a Gentile, in God's wonderful ways, every opportunity to boast has been eliminated. You have nothing to boast about but what He has done. That is the subject we see as we read this first part.

If you look in verse eighteen, the word boast is used twice. It says, "boast not against the branches." I will explain that in a moment. "But if thou boast," talking about us, the Gentiles, "it is not thou that bearest the root, but the root thee." This is the whole context of this explanation Paul gives of the mercies of God. In the end, we can only boast in mercy. There is nothing else. It was all done as part of His mercy.

The whole counsel of God was completed because of His grace and His mercy. And in that is all we can boast. Well, let me read this verse.

I Corinthians 1:30-31, you all know this, right? This is the whole explanation of the Christian life. And it says,

"But of him," now this is Paul writing to the Corinthian Church, and that "but of Him" is God. That is who it is. You could put in, "but of God," and some of your versions may already have that. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus," God has put you there.

As brother Jerry said, we are accepted in the Beloved. Do not ever forget that phrase, "in the Beloved." It is the whole of Christianity summed up in a phrase, "who has been made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and holiness, and redemption; that according as it is written, He that boasts, let him boast in the Lord."

Now do you see in those wonderful two verses any way you can boast in anything else? It is eliminated, whether you are Jew or Gentile.

### **The Mercy of God Toward the Jews and Gentiles**

To prove it, let me say the whole context of this mercy of God reaches back to Romans 11:11-15. I want to read verse eleven. I will read just that and you may understand this is what all the mercy is based on towards the Jews, and what all the mercy of God is based on toward the Gentiles.

This one verse in eleven says, "I say then, Have they stumbled in order that they might fall? (Was that the purpose?) Far be the thought: but by their fall there is salvation to the nations to provoke them to jealousy." This is God's ways.

God had a plan. He knew Israel would fail, and He knew we did not have the right stuff, and He had to prove it to us. So that in the end, it is all based on mercy, and every opportunity for us to boast has been eliminated by God Himself. Think of it. Israel stumbled, it tells what happened to them. They had more privileges than any nation, more divine privileges than any other nation had ever had in time. No nation! They were one nation, and they had all the divine privileges. And they failed, right? They stumbled. This is what Paul's summary is.

But they stumbled, and God allowed them to stumble, (if you will let me use that word. You might argue with me, but let me use it,) so He could prove to them in the end you will have nothing to boast of but the mercy of God. That is the end of Romans 11.

Besides that, somehow, in His wondrous ways, He is going to use that stumbling to bring in us, who had no title or right to the things of God, unlike the nation of Israel. And we Gentiles were swept into God's great purpose through the mercy of God. We were brought in. There was no right, there was no basis. Israel alone was the nation He had chosen. And yet God did that for only one reason. Of course He loved us; of course He wanted a bride for His son. But if we could narrow it down to Paul's context, He did this to provoke Israel to jealousy that they too might discover in the end it was not us after all. It was mercy. So that sort of gives you a starting point today.

In Romans 11:16, there are two figures of speech. Now, this may be confusing because Paul does not bother to explain it. You know, it would be helpful if Paul explained some of this vast revelation that he had from heaven. It would be helpful, but he does not always explain. So, we have to seek the Lord, and the Lord will show us and teach us His wondrous ways.

It says in verse sixteen, "Now if the first-fruit be holy (it is singular. I want you to notice that), the lump also; and if the root be holy, the branches also." Now, what does that mean? Think about it.

Well, the first fruit, and I think most commentators have agreed that this is Abraham. Abraham, he was the first fruit of Israel. Think of this guy. Do you think maybe he deserved it? He was an idol maker, from a family of idol makers. He was rescued from Mesopotamia. And his only claim is that the God of glory revealed Himself to him. That is mercy. Is that your testimony? That is my testimony. One day the God of glory showed up, revealed Himself, manifested Himself to you and to me, and we were changed forever. It had nothing to do with merit. It had everything to do with mercy.

So, if the first fruit is Abraham, some argue the patriarchs, who is the lump? Who is the lump? I have been called a "lump" before. Maybe you have too. But the lump here is the whole bread of wheat. The first fruit is the sheaf. Do you remember? It is in Leviticus 23:10. But I may not be remembering right. You remember, Israel was commanded to bring of the first fruits of the harvest. There it is plural.

The first fruits from the wheat, a sheaf, and present it to the high priest. And it would be an offering to God. So, what is the lump? The lump is Israel; it is the descendants of Abraham. The lump is Israel, it is the whole loaf of bread, if you will. That is the lump.

And you know, the Lord says an amazing thing. If the first fruit was holy, the lump also. That is the way He looks at it. Upon this basis, the whole of His restoration of the children of Israel is founded. This is the explanation of it. The root is the same thing as the first fruit; they are the same thing, just illustrated with a different set of words. The root is Abraham. The root is that man that was called and the glory of God appeared to him.

But then we see the branches. Who are the branches? The branches are Israel. And God's conclusion, the mystery of His ways, the way He sees it, because He sees what He is going to do in His grand plan of mercy is: if that first fruit and if that root was holy, then the lump will be holy. He is not talking about when they walked in Canaan land. They were far from holy. He is looking forward to the recovery: they will be holy. He is looking forward to the branches. And it says they have fallen away, some have fallen away. But one day, in the mercy of God, they will be holy.

### God's Mercy for Israel

Holy in the Old Testament is a different word and a different meaning than the New Testament. Holy in the Old Testament means set apart to God. Everything, the furniture and the tabernacle and the temple and all of these things, everything was set apart from God. That is holiness. He sees those things as set apart unto Him, as His. And because they are His, in the end, He will make it good because He can never fail. That is mercy.

The whole basis of God's recovery work, restoration and salvation, has to do with this divine thought. Holiness in the New Testament has a different meaning, it is sanctification. It is the same word as holiness, and we are being made holy. It does say in I Corinthians 1:30-31, "who has been made to us... holiness." Isn't that beautiful?

Sanctification is being made holy. You can be sure that God will complete His work. This is the whole basis of His recovery work in mercy. He sees something we do not see, something we cannot see, but because He has willed it, it will happen. Brothers and sisters, hold on to that thought for the rest of your life. God's ways are embedded, are upon the foundation of that single thought. Everything else is just the working out of it.

Well, look Romans 11:17 says, "Now if some of the branches have been broken out, and thou, being a wild olive tree." Did you know you are a wild olive tree? I am a wild olive tree! That is what the Gentiles are considered, "hast been grafted in amongst them, and hast become a fellow-partaker of the root and of the fatness of the olive tree, boast not against the branches." Well, how marvelous this is. I think you must first notice that word, "some," some of the branches have been broken out. Not "all," not "most," but Paul very deliberately used this word, by the Holy Spirit, that it was, "some of the branches." We know that is what Paul says in Romans 11:11. Some have been broken out, some have fallen, something has happened. This is the general fall of Israel. But thank God it never says all. How precious, how precious that is.

This is God's mercy for the children of Israel in the mystery of election. And then it says, speaking of us, "and thou, being a wild olive tree, hast been grafted in amongst them." Now think for a moment the mercy that has been shown to you and to me, Gentiles. God did not have to do it, although it was always His eternal plan, He did not have to do it. When you look at the Old Testament, you see one nation.

By the way, there has only been one nation ever that has been God's nation. I know you patriots here in the United States love to say America, the nation of God. Far from it. One nation, one people. Yet the mercy of God in this chapter was extended to us Gentiles.

### **God's Mercy for the Gentile**

Now when you read back in Romans 10:19, you hear God's estimation of us Gentiles. It says we were a, "no nation." That is what it means, "not a nation" in my version. But if you look at the literal meaning in the original Greek, it says we were a, "no nation." How would you like to be called a no nation? It gets worse. We were not only a no nation, we were, "a nation without understanding." Well, that bears close to ignorant. I do not want to insult any of you good people because I am one of you, a nation without understanding.

And yet the mercy of God in the mystery of election has been extended to a no nation and has been extended to a people without any understanding. That is God's mercy. Now do you think we can boast in anything when we understand the reality and the mercies of God? This is wonderful mercy towards us Gentiles.

I said it already; we had no right in the first place. There was only one nation and one people. And yet God in His great plan extended mercy to you and me, that we should be part of this people for testimony for Himself, His chosen people. We are part of that. What mercy, what abundant grace.

You know, we are not second-class citizens. Paul goes on to explain those things.

Verse 17 again, "Now if some of the branches have been broken out (we have covered that), and thou (that is us, understand that), being a wild olive tree, hast been grafted in amongst them, and hast become a fellow-partaker (This is the part I want you to see. Paul was very deliberate by the Holy Spirit.) of the root and of the fatness of the olive tree, boast not against the branches."

Brothers and sisters, you have not been brought in as a Gentile, just like me, as somehow this second-class citizen with limited privileges and mercies. This is what this means. You have been brought into the fatness of the olive tree, the fullness of the olive tree, and the mercies extended to you.

God has extended that golden scepter of grace and mercy in such a way that you have been brought into everything. You know, it is not that you barely made it. There is a saying, there is an idiom that we actually developed from the Bible: made it by the skin of your teeth. Now I do not know what that means because I do not think I have any skin on my teeth. But it actually comes from Job.

If you look it up in Job, the oldest book in the Bible, Job 19:20 says, “with the skin of my teeth.” He said just barely, nothing special. But brothers and sisters, Romans tells us that we are fellow partakers of the root and the fatness of the olive tree.

Oh, Paul knew what he was saying. The Romans knew what he was saying. We should know what he is saying in the mercies of God. How wonderful this is. It reminds me when you look at Romans 8:17, it says, “And if children, heirs also: heirs of God.” You know that verse, amazing revelation. “And if children, heirs of God.” But he did not stop there.

He said, “and Christ's joint heirs.” Now do you know what that means? That means Christ and you are joint heirs, and you share everything that is Christ. Can there be higher mercy than that? I had an old great uncle, Uncle Albert. Good name, right? Uncle Albert, good old country boy, had a pig farm down in North Carolina. One day I got a letter saying that I was an heir. I did not know I was an heir to anybody. And they told me there were forty-two heirs, forty-two of us.

They never had any children, Lillian and Uncle Albert, they just had pigs. I remember going down and slopping pigs. That is when I decided I wanted to stay a suburban boy. I am telling you; it is no fun slopping pigs. This was on the Cape Fear River of North Carolina. But I was an heir. I was an heir.

But now the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, you are more than that. You are joint heirs with Christ. There cannot be higher mercies than that. God could have said, I will let you in. I will let you in, go over there, sit on the bench. You will get some crumbs from the Master's table. But no, but never!

The plan of God, the mercy of election, the mystery of election in the mercy of God was that we would be ones that are full heirs. All is based on this eternal plan, and how we need to rejoice in God's mercies.

Verse 18 says, “boast not against the branches (that is again to us); but if thou boast, it is not thou that bearest the root, but the root thee.”

Verse 19 says, “Thou wilt say then, The branches have been broken out in order that I might be grafted in.” That is true. In fact, the apostle Paul, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, starts his next thought.

### **The Assurance of Salvation**

Verse 20 says, “Right (that is right): they have been broken out through unbelief, and thou standest through faith.” The only way we can stand, brothers and sisters, is in belief. He does all the rest. How wonderful John 3:16 is in its simplicity that it does not say, to come to God you have to do all these things. And if you have done all these things, you will have eternal life. It simply says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him (in His Son, which is all) may not perish, but have life eternal.” How wonderful is His mercies!

They are wonderful mercies. There is another point I would just like to make in verse 20 and 21. "They have been broken out through unbelief, and thou standest through faith. Be not high-minded, (we never can be high-minded) but fear: if God indeed has not spared the natural branches; lest it might be he spare not thee either."

Now, I think when people read verses like this, that is when they plummet. Do you know what I mean? "Oh, no, no, it is all over. This fellow has been up there talking for extended minutes about the mercy of God, and now he lowers the hammer that God may not spare thee either." That is not really the context.

The context is, it is all by believing. The only ones that are not spared are those who do not believe. This is the understanding: all we have to do is believe, and all the mercies of God through the mystery of election are unfolded to us.

As brother Jerry read this morning, "the riches of His grace" in Ephesians 1:7 and in Ephesians 2:7, "the surpassing riches of His grace." This is all it is, all it is in the mystery of election. How wonderful it is.

Now, verse twenty-one, some people think this has to do with losing your salvation. They could not be more wrong. It is about believing. That is the one thing He is looking for: believing. In other words, He is saying, "Believe, I will do the rest." But there are those that were found in unbelief. It is not about salvation. We need to understand brothers and sisters. Let me put it this way, once saved, always saved. Believe that. If you have believed in the Lord, that is enough of a connection that you are forever saved.

Now, you may be barely saved if you read I Corinthians 3:15, "Saved, but so as through the fire," but you are nevertheless saved. We do disservice to Paul's thoughts if we think this is talking about the saved losing their salvation. It is impossible. It is simply talking about the difference between the saved and the unsaved. The saved believe, and the unsaved do not believe. And therefore, the unsaved are condemned by their unbelief.

Well, Weust said this so clearly. He said, "Paul is not speaking of the possible loss of salvation on the part of the Gentile who glories against the Jews. It should be clear (listen to this), that those in danger of being cut off are unsaved Gentiles, and not cut off from salvation, for they have none, but cut off from a place where God might use them as unsaved Israel was cut off in the dispersion," not saved Gentiles. That is the marvelous difference.

### **The Goodness and Severity of God**

Well, let us look at the next point: The Goodness and Severity of God. We have a tendency to talk a lot about the goodness of God, but I think we have also a tendency to not talk about the severity of God. Right? Would you agree with that? We love to talk about love, grace, and mercy. And we should, especially when we come to this section.

But we need to understand that He is a righteous God, He is a holy God, and He could not tolerate sin. So much so that He made the ultimate decision that I will give my only begotten Son. And think of it, brothers and sisters, He will be made sin for you that you



might be made the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. How wonderful! That is the goodness of God.

I like what Govett said. He said these two things about the goodness and severity of God. He said they are, “the two great principles of God.” God is righteous, do not ever forget it. God is holy, do not ever forget it. But God is good, and His mercies extend to all generations. It is not on His part that they fall, they stumble, they disbelieve. It is on their part. His arms are always stretched open to us.

### **God's Faithfulness**

It says in that earlier chapter, 10:21, all the day long He is extending hands of mercy, hoping that everyone would turn to Him. Now, if we had been made robots, maybe we all would. But He gave us a free will, and therefore some will be unsaved. Well, you get the point of that.

Goodness has been called, “God's benevolent kindness.” Look at Romans 11:23. “And they too.” Now this is talking about Jews again.

I will tell you a little story. Linda will not listen to this, I promise you. I say “they” fairly often when I am talking about people. And she asks, “Who are ‘they?’” This English major drives me looney. So now I find myself going back and trying not to use the word, “they.” But Paul used the word, “they.” And who was he talking about? Here he is talking about the Jews. It says, “And they too, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able again to graft them in.”

Did you catch that? They had been found in unbelief. They turned against the living God. They had privileges and rights that no nation had. And yet they turned. Now, you would think, or I would think, that God would completely give up on those Jews forever. Cast them off and have nothing to do with them. Right? You would think.

But that would be wrong. According to the wondrous ways of God, Paul understood the mystery of election was that He, God, is even able to graft them in again. Isn't that marvelous? His ways are not our ways. We think: give up, give up on them, surely they deserve it.

The whole Bible is an illustration that His ways are not our ways. The recovery work at the end of the Old Testament was all based on this divine way, this one divine thought. The idea was He would never give up on what He promised and what was in His covenant. Never give up. He is able.

### **The Assurance of God's Ability**

God is able. What three powerful words. Those of you that tend to be melancholics, and I know some of those, this ought to be your word of assurance. God is able, He is able. I will never forget when I was sharing on divine assurance some time ago, and it jumped off the page to me, that little phrase, “He is able.” I started seeing it over and over in the

New Testament, the Bible. "He is able to do far exceedingly, abundantly, above all which we ask or think," right? Ephesians 3:20. Everybody knows that.

We saw a license plate coming here saying Jude 24. Linda said, "What does that mean?" I said, it means He is able to present you faultless, blameless before a holy God. In the end, these are His mercies. He is able! Do not ever forget this three-word phrase, He is able.

And to the children of Israel in the end of the Old Testament, after they had turned from Him, forsaken His covenant, defamed His name, He sent them into captivity. Now let me ask you this. Do you think of captivity as mercy? Do you? I do. It was a loving discipline of a Father. It is God saying, "I want to cure these ones so that they know My mercy."

When Nebuchadnezzar came and took over, he took them into Babylonian captivity. God never gave up. He should have, naturally. But that phrase that comes out in the Bible, Malachi 3:7 says, "Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts."

Oh, it occurs in Isaiah, it occurs in Jeremiah, it occurs in Zechariah. "Return unto me, it is all I want. If you return unto me, I will do the work. But if you refuse, you are lost forever." That is the whole context of the mystery of election. I hope you see that.

In Romans 11:24 it says, "For if thou." Now who is the, "thou" there? Well, he is writing to the Romans, right? So, I suspect it is these Gentiles of Rome. Okay? "For if thou hast been cut out of the olive tree wild by nature, and, contrary to nature, hast been grafted into the good olive tree, how much rather shall they, who are according to nature be grafted into their own olive tree?"

How remarkable. God did a demonstration to the Gentiles that the Jews, when their eyes are finally open, are not going to believe. They can say, "these Gentiles, all this mercy showed to them;" we were a wild olive tree. And this is not human speculation of Paul; this is divine anticipation of God. Do you understand the difference?

"I am able to graft them in again." This is the mystery of election. So many people say God is finished with the Jews. That is a terrible thought. I do not think you can read Romans 9, 10, 11 and come to that conclusion. God is not finished.

But thank God for the church age that all of us who had no right, no natural right as Israel did, natural privileges as they had, have been brought in by the mercy of God. This is powerful, powerful encouragement. God is able to graft them in again.

### **All Are Objects of Mercy**

Well, let us go to the third point, which is the main point: All Are Objects of Mercy. Now, you notice in verses 30 and 31 that phrase in there twice, right? "Objects of mercy." This is the ways of God. He shut up all to unbelief, Jew and Gentile, that in the end they would come to the divine conclusion that He already knew from all eternity past; and that

is, it would come for both Gentiles and Jews that they are only objects of mercy. That is the mystery of election.

Romans 11:25 is a loaded verse. I do not know if you have ever paid so much attention to verse twenty-five, but Paul, writing to the Romans, says, “For I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, of this mystery.” What mystery? I already told you; it is a mystery of election. That is what we see in these three chapters, the word election again and again.

“That ye may not be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the nations be come in.” If you think about it, that is a loaded verse. Now, he was not calling them ignorant, “for I do not wish you to be ignorant.” He wants to reveal to them the great counsel of God that had been hidden.

He wanted to show them something marvelous about the mystery of election. Paul informs them by revealing to them a formally hidden mystery of God. It has been hidden for all time.

Now, God is a God who likes to reveal His secrets. We like to hide our secrets. And maybe, if you come along and get really close to me, I will reveal to you some of my secrets. I would be glad to. But God wants to reveal His mysteries to all of mankind, Jew and Gentile, and convince them of His grace and mercy towards them.

He does not wish them to be ignorant. Mystery, among the heathen, is always used as mystery concealed. With Paul, it is always a mystery revealed. Do you see the difference? God is the revealer of His secrets.

How wonderful He is. It is not a hidden thing any longer when He makes it known through revelation. But the counsel of God when it is revealed is understood by the believer, and they know what it means.

### **The Temporary Blindness of Israel**

Now look at another part of verse twenty-five, “that blindness in part has happened to Israel,” right? I think you would agree with that. That means hardness. Some of the Bible versions use “hardness” or “hardening.”

But the glory of this section is, there is a coming day when the blinders will be taken off and Israel shall see what is in the heart of God, and they will be forever changed. And then this full verse goes into “until the fulness of the nations be come in.” This is an amazing verse, “until the fulness of the nations be come in;” it gives us a time when this great revelation will come back to the Jews.

And of course, we are going to go into that verse, “and so all Israel shall be saved.” This is a most controversial verse. But brothers and sisters, how wonderful. It is only temporary blindness; it is not endless blindness. It is temporary blindness until, “the fullness of the nations is come.”

Do you understand? That gives us the end, when that blindness shall disappear from the nation of Israel. It sets a limit on that.

## **The Fullness of the Nations Is Come**

Now what did Paul mean by, “the fullness of the nations shall come?” There is another similar verse in the New Testament. Luke 21:24 says, “until the times of the nations be fulfilled.” Now this is talking differently. It is about the destruction of Jerusalem when Jerusalem in 70 AD is trampled under the feet of the nations.

By the way, that time still exists. Everybody talks about the 1967 war and Israel getting Jerusalem. But it was only West Jerusalem. East Jerusalem is still under the control of the Jordanians. And so, in fact, we are still in that period that Jerusalem is trodden under the feet of the nations.

But there is a coming day, a coming day. This is the encouragement that the fullness of the nations comes. Now what does that mean? Brothers and sisters, I do not want to beat around the bush, and some of you may not agree, but I am going to at least tell you what I think and try to justify it. I think that time is the kingdom, the millennial kingdom.

When will all Israel be saved? I think it is at the beginning of the millennial kingdom, when the Lord shall come and the Lord shall appear. And when they see Him, according to Zechariah 12:10, “whom they have pierced.” This is when I think the time of the nations is full, “the fullness of the nations.”

That is the end of the church age if you think about it. That is the end when one brother, I think it was Brother Wuest, said, “when all the Gentiles that are to be saved will be saved and it will be full, the registry full.” Is it the kingdom, the millennial kingdom?

Now we do not talk much about the millennial kingdom. That is unfortunate. Brother Jerry Aman likes to tell a story about Brother Kaung. He went to him one day, we were still quite young in the Lord, and he said, “Brother Kaung, why do you not teach us more and speak more about the kingdom of God?” And Brother Kaung said an amazing thing. He said, “You were not ready.”

## **The Literal Interpretation**

Are we ready? Do we understand in this mystery of election, that the kingdom of God coming when the Lord returns will be the time of change when all Israel shall be saved? Now I think sometimes this controversial verse about all Israel being saved, we get sort of spiritual with it. You know, we say, well, it means those that were saved in the first century. It means those that are saved throughout the church period.

But no, brothers and sisters, it means something far more marvelous, far greater than that. It means at the end of the times of the nations, literally, all Israel shall be saved. How marvelous. This was God's intention.

When they see Him, there is going to be the greatest evangelical meeting that you have ever seen. You may not agree with this either. In fact, in the kingdom, Israel shall rule for a thousand years on the earth over the nations. And we, the raptured church of God, will rule in the heavens with Christ. This is the kingdom.

Do we believe it? Do we think it is just figurative? Do we think it is just the past? No, it is the thing Paul tried to reveal in this mystery of election. That when the fullness of the nations comes; when is that? the beginning of the thousand-year kingdom, then all Israel shall be saved. I think it is literal.

I think it is going to be the greatest revival that the world has ever seen. When everyone living in Jerusalem and Israel at last sees their Messiah and bends the knee; and longs for this One like one longs for a lost son, an only begotten, and they respond. And at that time, they know the mercies of God, the mystery of election. This is so clear, so wonderful.

Zechariah 13:1 says, "In that day," it is a day, a specific day, the coming of the Lord just at the kingdom. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."

"In that day," now notice, it is very clear. Zechariah was very clear. It is for the house of David; it is for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. If the church is caught up, and I do not dare go here now, whether you believe it is all or some, I will avoid that one, at least for now. This is the day all Israel is saved - the house of David, the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And that one, you know, that I mentioned, it is Zechariah 12:10. "And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications." Brothers and sisters, this is the beginning of God's great revealing of the mystery of election. This is the day when all, you can believe the word is literal, "all Israel shall be saved." And this is the day when we are caught up to be with the Lord.

How wonderful that day is. He goes on in Romans 11:27 and says, "And this is the covenant from me to them, when I shall have taken away their sins." Now who is "them?" It is the Jews. This is My covenant to them. You know, this is speaking of Jeremiah 31:31-34. Brothers and sisters, I want to inform you Gentiles just like me, that it is mercy that we were brought into the covenant that was for Israel originally. Listen to this.

Maybe I can convince you. If you believe, if you read Jeremiah 31:31, "Behold, days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." You have been privileged by the mercy of God to be swept into that fatness and fullness of the olive tree. And you have experienced the whole of the new covenant, just like you were always one of His. How wonderful it is!

And then He says in verse 34, "And their sin will I remember no more." All this will happen when the kingdom appears at the end. And how wonderful it is. Well, I hope you understand this. This is the great mystery of election, that we have been included in that covenant, and all the promises of Israel will be at last fulfilled, all the promises.

### **The Inclusion of Gentiles**

Do you think we somehow spiritualize all those promises and say, oh, no, no, no. These are now for church. They are not all for the church. We have been included in all

those promises, but they are also specifically for Israel. What a wonderful day that will be when all Israel is saved.

One brother said I chickened out and did not share on Romans 11:28. It was a time issue, but was in my notes. Romans 11:28 says, "As regards the glad tidings, they are enemies on your account." Paul, who wrote this wonderful verse, was himself an enemy of the gospel before he was saved on the road to Damascus. He along with the Jewish leaders were enemies of the church. This is a statement of fact. The second phrase of verse 28 says, "but as regards election, beloved on account of the fathers." This phrase is what is in the heart of God concerning the mystery of election.

And then when you come to Romans 11:30 and 31, you begin to see something marvelous about the ways of God. "For as indeed ye also (Gentiles) once have not believed in God, but now have been objects of mercy through the unbelief of these (Jews); so these also have now not believed in your mercy, in order that they (Jews) also may be objects of mercy." In the end, brothers and sisters, this is all of us. Who can boast? You as a Gentile are an object of mercy. The Jews, an object of mercy even after they had failed miserably. All the privileges given to them, yet at the last are objects of mercy.

I would suggest if you want to shock someone, your friend or enemy; if they come up to you and say, "well, who are you?" Stick out your hand and say, "I am an object of mercy." That is all you are. Mercy has been extended to you. Mercy has been extended to me. This is what Romans 11 is all about.

### **Exultant Worship Our Only Response**

Well, I think when you come to the end, you see the only response that we can have. Exultant worship is our only response. Look at Romans 11:33. Paul is caught up, he is enraptured with worship. He is full of worship! I wonder how he could write these words.

But he said, "O depth of riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable his judgments, and untraceable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor? or who has first given to him, and it shall be rendered to him." This is exultant worship.

Exultant worship means jubilant worship. We just had a whole family conference on the jubilee. This is our jubilee in the kingdom of God, when all is revealed and all Israel is saved. And we are reigning with Christ, and they are reigning on the earth, and the nations all over the earth are receiving the blessings that come through Israel.

Brothers and sisters, we will be in our jubilee, the beginning of our eternal jubilee, a thousand-year kingdom and then eternity afterwards. This is Romans, chapter 11. This is the mystery of election. It is all based simply on the mercy that has been revealed to us.

## Conclusion

One of the most powerful verses is verse thirty-six. There is so much packed in this verse, “For of him, and through him, and for him are all things: to him be glory for ever. Amen.” Everything we heard it this morning, everything comes from Him, everything is of Him. He is the source, everything is through Him. He is the way, He is the life, He is the enabling. And everything in the end is for Him. I think this one thought contains the whole of the Christian life; it is all Him. Whereof can you boast?

You can only boast in the end that you are an object of mercy. The highest, the most heavenly, the most divine, the most far reaching, those are what we have received in Christ Jesus. Now may the Lord open our eyes. You know, Dana kept saying in the conference, we need to see a big Christ.

We need to see. We need to see the big things He does. We need to see the big things we are brought into. If we do, we will never be the same. And in the end, when we see Him face to face, whether it be at the throne or in the air, we will say, it was all Your mercy. This is Romans 11:16-36.

*Lord, we do not have the capacity to explain these words. Forgive us. But Lord, capture us with a glimpse of it, that we will never be the same; that we will be a changed people, objects of mercy, knowing the mystery of election; knowing we have nothing to boast of, knowing You have done it all, and You will do it all. And the one thing You are looking for is a response. Lord, we want to pray that we would respond like the Apostle Paul. That we see it in our spirit. It will be made real to us, that mystery of election hidden from the ages. And we will respond in exultant, jubilant, unceasing worship, because You are worthy. In Your precious name. Amen.*

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