

# The Future of Israel (Part 3)

by Richard Ganz

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*The sermon explores the mystery of Israel's hardening and salvation, revealing God's plan for the national restoration of Israel and the blessing of the Gentiles.*

**Duration:** 36:06

**Scripture:** Isaiah 59:20-21, Jeremiah 31:31-36, Matthew 6:33, Romans 11:23-36

**Topics:** "Future Of Israel"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on Romans 11 and explores God's view of Israel. The sermon is part of a three-part study on the future of Israel. The speaker emphasizes that God's word does not change and that what he promises, he will bring about. The sermon highlights the interplay between Jews and Gentiles in God's plan and emphasizes that God bestows mercy on whom he pleases. The speaker concludes by stating that a proper and biblical view of Israel is vital to our attitudes towards Jewish people and the nation of Israel.

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## Transcript

Romans 11. We're going to finish our three-part study. I'm reading just two verses where we're looking tonight, although I will summarize briefly from earlier messages.

I'm reading just 25 and the first part of 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. I'll read those that passage with it. The deliverer will come from Zion.

He will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins. Father in heaven, as we finish our look at this question of the future of Israel, I pray for your blessing upon our study.

I pray that you would help me to speak clearly so that your people will truly understand the issues involved, the importance of this in the redemptive plan of God, and the significance of the reality that it is God's glory ultimately, as always, that is at stake in our understanding. So we pray for wisdom as we deal with this. In Jesus' name, amen.

Tonight we're finishing our study on the future of Israel. We have seen to this point how this intertwines with our studies in both Isaiah and the Revelation. We've also seen how integral a proper and biblical view of Israel, and in this sense we're looking at it, the nation of Israel, the Jewish people, is to our lives and how it is vital to what our attitudes are towards the people of Israel, and how we deal with and approach Jewish people that we have the opportunity to encounter, which then extends to how we see, of course, the nation of Israel.

The issue boils down to this. How does God view Israel? What does he tell us through his word on what his approach and his view toward Israel is? What does this reveal about God? And what does this all mean in terms of how we view God, view Jewish people, view others, and even ourselves? What we have done to this point, we've followed Paul through three chapters, Romans 9, Romans 10, and Romans 11, in his argument and his presentation concerning God, concerning Old Covenant Israel, concerning the Jewish people today, and the Gentiles, the nation of Israel today. We have seen that there is a layering, an interplay in God's plan between Jews and Gentiles.

Salvation is always, as Paul tells us in Ephesians 2, 8 and 9, by grace, through faith, that it's not of ourselves, that it's the gift of God, it's not as a result of works, but the reason being so that no one can boast. This is how God has always worked and how God continues to work through the ages for both Jew and Gentile in both the Old and the New Covenant. There is not any sense anywhere in the Bible of two ways of salvation, one for the Jew and one for the Gentile at any time, and that includes the Old Covenant, and you can go back to Genesis chapter 15, verse 6, where we read that Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

Not that he left Ur of the Chaldees, not that he simply obeyed God in different things, it was that he believed God. That is what was the basis of his justifying faith in the people of God with their father Abraham. At the same time, God has an amazing and outstanding, and perhaps you might even say outstandingly intricate plan for how all of this comes about.

Israel as a nation is chosen by God to bring forth the Messiah Jesus Christ, which despite itself, despite its disobedience, its refusal to obey again and again, it did. The Messiah came through that nation, but Israel was hardened, and Israel rejected the Messiah, and so Israel as a body of people fell and is cast off, which remains its status, redemptively speaking, to this very day, with only a remnant of Jews remaining faithful to Jesus Christ. Through Israel's sin and rejection, blessings and riches came to the world.

That is, the world, other than Israel, that means the goyim, the nations, because at Israel's fall, the gospel was extended to the Gentiles as a body, and this ingathering of the Gentiles is taking place and will provoke Israel to jealousy, and thus causing an outpouring of God's grace on them, the preponderance of the Jewish people to be gathered in, and an occurrence which will cause even greater riches to accrue to the Gentiles and greater glory to God. The fullness of the Gentiles brought about because of Israel's rebellion, Israel's sin will cause the fullness of Israel, and the fullness of God's people leads to the further blessings of God on the world, what Paul, in verse 16, calls the greater riches that their fullness will bring. This is what Paul calls it.

Because of this, Paul warns us to view the Jewish people in a proper biblical light, not elevating them on a pedestal, nor viewing them in an arrogant, derogatory, or demeaning manner. The believers of Old Covenant Israel form, he says, the root of God's cultivated olive tree. The Gentile are branches from wild trees which God has grafted in.

This is the imagery that he uses to describe the relationship. They're both in that same tree, but one comes from what's wild, one comes from the root, a cultivated tree. And Israel, which is a body, was the natural olive branches, has been cut off, but will be grafted back in again, thus resulting in a beautiful olive tree consisting of a natural root and natural and wild branches.

Paul now comes to the climactic conclusion of his whole three chapter argument. It's in verses 25 and 26. Paul, as we saw, begins his climactic conclusion this way, I do not want you to be ignorant.

And he goes on by warning us not to be ignorant of the mysterion, the mystery, so that we are not arrogant. This mystery is wisdom and knowledge which God, through his word, reveals to us, but which remains incomprehensible to unbelievers. Among the mysteries that God reveals to us, there is one mystery which in Romans 11, Paul says, we must not be ignorant of.

What is the mystery Paul speaks of? William Hendrickson, in a very excellent commentary, I've used it many times, says that the mystery is that, quote, the Jewish remnant accepts Christ in accordance with God's eternal plan. Hendrickson then asks, now, is not that just too wonderful for words? So he's aware that there has to be a wonder, and he asks, isn't that what's too wonderful for words? Hendrickson's point is that the revealed mystery is that the Jewish remnants through the ages accept Christ. Hendrickson concludes his discussion by saying, it is obvious that if in every age some Israelites are hardened, it must also be true that in every age some are saved.

Paul expresses this thought in words that have given rise to much controversy. And so all Israel shall be saved. That's his conclusion.

Hendrickson is certainly correct about these last words, because, and so all Israel shall be saved, are indeed some of the most contentious and controversial words in the Bible. But we've already seen this morning that it makes absolutely no sense in the light of Paul's argument and the rest of the Bible to view all Israel as just a remnant of Israel. What then is the mystery that we are to know so that we don't become arrogant? Paul tells us, saying in verses 25 and 26, that the mystery is that, quote, a partial hardening has come upon Israel until the rest of Israel shall be saved.

What? What, in the light of Paul's argument, does this mystery Paul speaks of mean? The words for so, in so shall all Israel be saved, means in this way. In this way, all Israel will be saved. In other words, in the same way as what? As the fullness of the Gentiles, so too Israel will be saved.

Verse 12 uses the same word for fullness that's used in verse 26, but it uses it in reference to Israel, saying that the fullness of Israel will bring far more riches than the riches Israel's sin and rejection of Jesus brought the Gentiles. And so then there will be the fullness of the Gentiles and in a like manner the fullness of Israel. Verse 12 says that if Israel's sin and fall redemptively as a body is riches for the Gentiles and the world, how much more will their fullness be? As we saw this morning, this is clearly speaking of national Israel.

It speaks of a time that's coming when there is a fullness in the salvation of Israel. Verses 25 and 26 are linked to this verse, that is verse 12. Since in verse 25 there's a picture of an equally large number of Gentiles, that is the full number of the Gentiles coming in due to a partial hardening of Israel.

Now this fullness using the word fullness, in this argument the same word in both cases must mean the same thing in both cases. It is exegetically, in terms of our exegesis, it is untenable to conclude that the

earlier mentioned fullness of Israel in verse 12 is simply a sum total of Jewish remnants, but the fullness of the Gentiles in verse 25 is not. To be equated with a sum total of Gentile remnants.

In other words, it's not to be equated that way, it's to be equated differently for the Gentiles than it is for the Jews. If we take Hendrickson's argument, that's what you have to say, which not only makes no sense, which not only goes against the thrust of what Paul is saying in Romans 11, but also such a remnant theology does no service to the intended force of the term fullness. John Murray puts it this way, fullness intimates a proportion such as supplies contrast with what goes before.

Okay, so the conclusion is that the fullness of the redemption of Israel is no different than what we should expect in looking at the fullness of the Gentiles. And this is strengthened by the fact that Paul, in using the word so, or in this way, is saying that in the same way as the fullness of the Gentiles has come about, so too will the fullness of Israel, or so too will Israel be saved. Now taking Paul's argument as a whole, what we have is simple within the context of a now revealed mystery.

Israel, the Jewish people, have been hardened and cast off redemptively by God, but not irretrievably so. By the way, that's not a foregone conclusion. Most of the evangelical world will see that the redemptive place that Israel had in the old covenant, they still maintain in the new covenant.

That's equally untenable with the coming of Christ and the building of the new covenant, Ecclesia, the new covenant for hell and a dot, the congregation, the assembly, the church, the called out ones, you can't do that without running havoc and risking havoc with any sense of what a redemptive people means. So, the mystery, Israel, Jewish people, hardened, cast off redemptively by God, but not irretrievably cast off. The fullness of the Gentiles brings the end to the partial hardening of Israel and leads to the restoration of the nation of Israel in terms of faith in their Messiah.

At the same time, the fullness of Israel brings huge blessings also to the Gentiles, verses 12 and 15. It is really unwarranted to assume that the fullness of the Gentiles, as John Murray puts it, leaves room for no further expansion of gospel blessing. The fullness of the Gentiles, he goes on, denotes unprecedented blessing for them, but does not exclude even greater blessing to follow.

It is to this subsequent blessing that the restoration of Israel contributes. You see what he's saying. This greater blessing, it's contributed to by what takes place with Israel.

Now, having seen all of this, what then does, and so all Israel will be saved, mean? This brings us, of course, to the very heart of the issue. Before going further, it's important to point out that in every reference in the Bible, well, before, every reference at the very least, let's look at it this way, in this chapter to Israel, every single reference, and I meant to count up each reference. I'm sorry.

I forgot at the last minute to do that. There are a substantial number of them. Every single reference in the 11th chapter to Israel, Paul has been speaking about the physical nation of Israel, the body of ethnically Jewish people.

Thus, in verse 26, all Israel cannot suddenly refer to anything other than the nation of Israel. An unstated switch of terms and meanings to have the term Israel suddenly mean something different so that it includes Gentiles or so that it just refers to a remnant, a tiny few here and there through the ages is exegetically untenable. I call this, this is my term, I call this replay hermeneutics.

Let me explain what I mean by that. For the last 10 years or so, in the NFL, which is the National Football League, a challenge to a referee's call on a play can be made after the play. In such a challenge, the principle for the referee's reversal of their initial call, which by all good and necessary inference seemed clearly the correct call when they made it and was not even overturned by any of the other referees on the field at that time, is this.

Before any ruling from the field, a ruling which was clear, a clear decision at the time, can be overturned, there has to be thoroughly compelling evidence to allow such overturning. Here's my point. Since every statement to this point in Romans 11 deals with Israel as a nation, then if there's going to be a change, if suddenly verses 25 and 26 will no longer be speaking about the nation, the body of Israel, Jewish people of Israel when they mention Israel, suddenly without any statement qualifying what he's saying, the evidence would have to be thorough, the evidence would have to be compelling for such a change of meaning.

And that's what causes Professor John Murray to say, it is exegetically impossible to give to Israel in this verse any other denotation than that which belongs to the term throughout this chapter. This entire chapter of Romans 11 is making a clear contrast between Israel and the Gentiles. Verse 23 speaks of Israel being grafted in again.

If this is only speaking of historic Jewish remnants throughout their history, it was not necessary to say that they would be grafted in again, because obviously if it's remnants throughout history that are being grafted in, whenever such individuals come to faith, even in verse 25, Israel as a mass and the Gentiles as a mass are contrasted. They would have been grafted in in the past already anyway. If verse 25 argues that the hardening of Israel is to end and contrasting that, Israel will be restored, to say that all Israel is Jew and Gentile together destroys any significance to that term, that kind of terminology.

If verse 26 is understood to view Israel as a combination of all Jewish and Gentile believers, not only has the whole entire argument and understanding of the chapter changed, but also it has changed without any notice and without any relationship to the context of the text, which in this case is the entire chapter and the argument of the apostle going back to chapter 9. In such a view then, even the argument of the immediate context of verse 25, speaking distinctly of national Israel as completely distinct from the rest of the nations, would be rendered by this approach utterly meaningless. John Murray says that to see Romans 11.26 as speaking of anything less than a national restoration would be exegetical blasphemy. Violence.

Another point of note is this. What mystery, what musterion for which we must not be ignorant is there in all the elects of history being saved? We know that. We don't need to be told that.

That's not a mystery. We know. All the elects from all of history are going to be saved.

If this is simply the case, there is no need for Paul to waste all of our time and create such an incredible controversy for something that doesn't even need to be said. Let him say nothing, let alone spend three chapters on this issue. The mystery was the thoroughly unexpected revelation that God is going to restore Israel, not as a remnant, but nationally.

That is, as a mass of people from around the world, Jewish people. The theme of this entire 11th chapter of Romans is the restoration of the Jewish people by God. There is not a single biblical reference viewing such a work of restoration being intended for remnants alone or simply meaning all those, Jew and

Gentile, together, who are saved.

Again, to quote John Murray, he summarizes this argument, I think, beautifully here's his summary. There is no other alternative than to conclude that the proposition, all Israel shall be saved, is to be interpreted in terms of the fullness, the receiving, the engrafting of Israel as a people, the restoration of Israel to gospel favor and blessing, and the correlative turning of Israel from unbelief to faith and repentance. Paul is speaking about the final revelation of God regarding Jews and Gentiles.

Not a single one from him follows on the heels of this. It's a mystery of which God does not want all who are his people, which includes us, to be ignorant. So examining the argument, then, what we have is this.

As a body, Israel, the Jewish people, brought in by the Messiah, as a body, Israel sinned, rejected Jesus and the gospel, and as a body, Israel was cast off, and the gospel went to the Gentiles as a body. However, Israel is not cast off forever, Romans 11, all through the chapter. That's it.

Redemptively, a partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. That partial hardening doesn't mean just a part of Israel. It means it's not a total hardening.

It means they're not cast off so as to be un- or irretrievable by God. This blessing to the Gentiles, receiving and partaking in the promises of God and in God's benefits, will provoke Israel to envy. Yes, it will.

It's doing it, and it will continue to do it. What a blessing to be used to do that with God's ancient covenant people, which will, you see, in turn, by the working of God's grace, by the way, see Zechariah, look this up on your own, chapter 12, verses 10 and 11, gather the preponderance of the Jewish people and graft them back into the olive tree, bringing in the fullness of Israel and showing forth spectacular riches on the world. So the gospel moves from Israel to the Gentiles, back to Israel, bringing in the fullness of the Gentiles and the fullness of Israel.

This is the mystery we are facing today. To know and not be ignorant of. The nation of ethnic Israel, the Jewish people, will move from the preponderance of it being in unbelief to the preponderance of it being in belief.

What an incredible orchestration by God this is. What a mystery that is revealed. I don't think you could find anyone without the scripture saying, I just have a hunch this is the way it's going to work out.

It has an impossibility connected to it. Israel is hardened and rejects the Messiah and rejects the gospel. The gospel goes to the Gentiles, which in turn brings in the fullness of the Gentiles, provoking Israel to jealousy so that she, as a mass, turns to Jesus and the fullness of Israel is brought in.

Thus, in the end, the fullness of the Gentiles and the fullness of Israel is gathered in. We're not talking primarily about a physical space in the Middle East when we speak of Israel. We're using a concept that refers to their ethnicity, Israel, as one can be.

You are Israel if you belong to the Jewish Messiah, Abraham, ethnically as your father, even as he is spiritually to each one of us coming from a Gentile background. So the fullness of Israel is gathered in, God, through his grace and spirit, using each to bring in the other. I just find that an incredible revelation.

This understanding of verse 26 is seen, of course, in connection to the preceding verses. It necessitates viewing the restoration of Israel in a manner that is equal and opposite to their casting away and their

hardening as a nation, or else the intent of the chapter is unintelligible. Once again, John Murray says, in a word, it is the salvation of the mass of Israel that the apostle affirms.

Paul, he goes on to say in verses 26 and 27 that this is the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, and there are those two quotes from Jeremiah 31, 31 through 36, read it, and Isaiah 59, 20 through 21, and it's on your outline so you can follow it later. Time, of course, does not allow me a detailed accounting of the remaining verses of Romans 11. There's a section under there that we haven't looked at.

All of these verses, by the way, substantiate the thesis that I presented to you. They are essentially saying that God does not change and that God's word does not change what he promises he will bring about, and he is working in marvelous ways behind the scenes, ways that far exceed our imagination, in his great plan and in his great wisdom. God bestows mercy on those whom he bestows mercy, and at the time he pleases to bestow mercy, so that at the end of it all, the fullness of the people of God consists of a double fullness.

That is, consisting of the fullness of the Jews as a people and the fullness of the nations as a people, and is brought in, and it can be said that God has shown mercy on all. This leaves us with one thing, glory, glory to God, but as we close, and before we get there, notice just one reference from verse 28. It's a kind of explanatory statement to the mystery.

Referring to the fullness of Israel yet to be brought in, we read these words, they are loved. This explanation is unnecessary, by the way, it's unnecessary if only individuals of a remnant are intended as the intended recipients of this, but God is explaining an outpouring of grace that is such a thoroughly new revelation that it demands an explanation. This is the explanation, the same as it was in Deuteronomy chapter 7 verse 17, they are loved.

The reason for Israel's choice in the old covenant, they are loved, it is the love of God, it's nothing in them. The reason they are loved in the new covenant, there is nothing of them, it's the grace and mercy of God. The reason for Israel's salvation is the same reason as for our salvation.

They are loved, we are loved, and Paul concludes this now revealed mystery with the most glorious doxology, I think, in the entire Bible. The doxology, I would say most of us are familiar, but about which few are aware of the context. Paul concludes the now revealed mystery, this extraordinary mystery that was not possible to understand, humanly speaking, by exclaiming in verses 33 through 36, oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways are past finding out, for who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor, who has given first to him, so that it will be recompensed back to him, for of him and through him and to him are all things, and then the end of it all, is the beginning of it all, the beginning and the end of it all, to whom be the glory forever and ever, amen.

What a magnificent message. What a magnificent doxology. In it, the apostle Paul shows the ultimate purpose of the restoration of Israel, and with this, we should be satisfied.

The restoration of Israel is not primarily for Israel. It's not even primarily about Israel, nor is it primarily for us. This display of mercy, verses 30 and 31, you can read it, is meant to display something far more wondrous than a national restoration of cast off Jewish people.

This restoration is designed to reveal the one to whom the glory belongs forever and ever. It is a glorious plan, and yet at the same time, it is not fully comprehensible to us, which the other theories are not. It's not fully, but it's comprehensible enough that we can understand the basic working parameters and paradigm of it.

Here, the apostle says, for who has known the mind of the Lord, the way the Lord thinks? Who has known that? Or who has been his counselor to tell him how to do this with Israel or the Gentiles? So the apostle Paul says, see, even what God has revealed, even what he reveals is incomprehensible to the mind of man. I mean, the cross, it's incomprehensible. The world doesn't want to understand it.

How could he kill his son? Who wants to worship a God like that? I've heard that a number of times. I'm sure you have, too. God's glory-filled plan is met with a glory-filled fulfillment, revealing a glorious God whose ways, verse 33 says, are beyond figuring out.

That's the point. His ways are beyond figuring out. And to this God, our God, belongs but one reality, glory.

Isaiah 6, verse 3, says it best. Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh, adonai tzevaot melechol ha'oretz. Kavodoh, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.

The whole earth is filled with his glory. This is the God, our God, who loved us and gave himself for us. All glory, friends, all honor, all majesty, dominion, and power belong to him.

Let our response be that of His glory. Let our response be that of the great multitude in heaven in Revelation 7, 12, the multitude that falls on their faces in reverence and worship before God and crying out that the only thing that is possible in such a position is that. Amen.

Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever. With the multitude crying out in response to such doxological glory, amen. Father in heaven, I thank you.

I thank you for a mystery and I thank you that we do not have cold searches as so many police units around the world these days have with cases that cannot ever be understood or solved. You have solved one of the great mysteries to the race of men, which is your redemptive people. Who are they? How you're dealing with them and even your plan of dealing with them in the future.

God, I pray that we would work with you in this, that you would empower us to have a heart to see the Gentiles brought in and to have a heart as well to realize that there is a burden to work towards that day when your word will be realized with these words. And so in this way, all Israel has indeed been saved. We thank you for the redemptive work upon this world through the blood of Christ on Jew and Gentile alike and the way that you've worked it out and shown us in these three chapters and we give you the glory for it.

In Jesus name, amen.

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