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Sermon Notes

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All Israel Will Be Saved

Romans 11:25-32

Introduction

Experience in Milan Airport: Three different groups of Jews, dressed in conspicuous ways...Romans 11 began to work on my heart... first I detected a kind of spiritual pride rising inside me as I watched a Jewish man stand before a wall facing in the direction of Jerusalem and pray like the Jews do in front of the Wailing Wall. I felt pride rising up and said in my heart, "Why can't they see Christ in the Scriptures like I do?" I felt that God would not honor this man's piety if he did not trust in Christ. But then Romans 11 rebuked me in any feelings of pride. "You are a wild olive shoot... grafted into a Jewish tree." Secondly Romans 11 opened my eyes in wonder as a I saw a second group of Jews walk by, orthodox, wearing their wide-brimmed hats and black smocks and earlocks and long beards... I thought "What are the odds that any of them could be saved?" And then I realized the astonishing promise that there would come a day, perhaps even in our lifetime, when God will fulfill a mysterious promise He made two thousand years ago through a Jewish Rabbi named Paul:

"All Israel will be saved."

The purpose of today's sermon is to understand that great mystery!!

I. Context

A. Overall Purpose: To deal with the issue of the Jewish nation as a whole

1. Gentiles tempted to say that God is finished with the Jews as a nation

a. It certainly seems that way, since they were and are almost universally rejecting Christ

2. Gentiles also tempted to feel spiritually superior to the Jews

B. Two Part Summary

1. The rejection of Israel is NOT TOTAL: "I am an Israelite myself" AND "There is a remnant chosen by grace"

2. The rejection of Israel is NOT PERMANENT

C. Now: Direct Prophetic Assertion

Possible: *God is able to graft them in again.*

Probable: *how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!*

Guaranteed: *And so all Israel will be saved*

II. Astounding Mystery Revealed: “All Israel Will Be Saved”

vs. 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. ²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved

A. Why God Reveals This Mystery

1. Ancient Mystery Religions

- a. Paul mentions in Colossians 2
- b. Based on secret knowledge only the select few, the spiritual elite can possess
- c. Fosters pride and spiritual envy

2. Christianity a mysterious religion also

Paul called the Gospel a Mystery Ordained from Before the Creation of the World

^{ESV} 1 Corinthians 2:7 But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

Paul will speak of this mystery again in Romans... an ancient mystery now openly revealed and proclaimed around the world

Romans 16:25-27 Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶ but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith- ²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

- a. However, these mysteries do NOT foster spiritual pride or breed a spiritual elitism
 - i) God proclaims these mysteries all around the world to anyone who will listen
 - ii) The price of admission is HUMILITY
- b. All of Christ's wisdom available to the truly humble who seek it from Him

Matthew 11:25 At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.

God will reveal these mysteries of the future in His word to any who humble themselves and seek wisdom by faith

3. Paul's Two Reasons

vs. 25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited

a. So that we will not be ignorant

b. So that we will not be arrogant

B. Unwrapping the Mystery Point by Point

1. Israel Has Experienced a Hardening in Part

vs. 25 Israel has experienced a hardening in part

- a. "Israel" as throughout the chapter: the NATION of Israel, the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
- b. Israel's hardening: already dealt with and addressed

Romans 11:7 What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened

- i) Greek word = "porosis"
- ii) The word refers to the hardening of their hearts
- iii) Simply put, it is their refusal to come to Christ when confronted with the clear evidence of His deity and His Messianic credentials

John 5:39-40 *You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me to have life.*

2 Corinthians 3:14-15 *But their minds 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. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.*

c. This hardening has come from God Himself

Romans 11:8 *as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day."*

John 12:39-41 *For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: ⁴⁰ "He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn-- and I would heal them." ⁴¹ Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.*

d. Now we see the joyful ramifications of this truth that it is GOD HIMSELF who has given the hardening... therefore, it is GOD HIMSELF who controls how long it will last and when it will be removed

Illus. Nebuchadnezzar's seven years of insanity

Daniel 4:16-17 *Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times pass by for him. ¹⁷ "The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men*

At the end of the seven years, Nebuchadnezzar was able to come to his sense only because God removed the insanity that clouded his normal reason

The seven years were mandated by God, a time set by His wisdom and power, announced four times: twice in the dream, once in Daniel's interpretation, and once by the voice from heaven

The seven years of insanity were fixed, and not before that time elapses did God allow Nebuchadnezzar to come to his senses and repent from his sin

2. Until the Full Number of the Gentiles Comes In

a. This gives the time extent of the hardening

b. God has measured out how long He will wait to remove Israel's hardening

c. He measures it here, not in terms of days, months, years, or centuries

- d. Rather, it's a measure of a certain thing being accomplished... "The fullness of the Gentiles coming in"
- e. In other words, God will maintain Israel's hardness until the mass of the Gentiles is converted
- f. This mass of Gentiles will come from all over the world

Matthew 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.

Revelation 7:9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

- g. God measures things out... carefully precise... the elect Gentiles, who are appointed for eternal life, must fully come in
- h. Physical inheritance of Jews in the Promised Land **ORIGINALLY HUNG ON GOD'S MEASUREMENT OF GENTILE SIN!!!**

God told Abram in Genesis 15:

Genesis 15:16 In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure."

- i. Now spiritual inheritance of the Jews in eternal life **HANGS ON GOD'S MEASUREMENT OF GENTILE CONVERSIONS!!!**
- j. When the fullness of the Gentiles has responded to the gospel, then God will turn to the Jews

3. And So All Israel Will Be Saved

vs. 26 And so all Israel will be saved

- a. Now comes the astounding mystery of this passage
 - i) A mystery so amazing that no one could have guessed it by observation
 - ii) Something we could not have known except that God revealed it by prophecy
 - iii) For two thousand years, Jews have come to Christ in a vanishingly small percentage... a tiny trickle
 - iv) The overwhelming majority of Jews have maintained their Jewish identity and rejected Christ

- v) Attempts at evangelism have resulted in abuse and opposition and anger
 - vi) Orthodox Jews continued to wear their distinctive clothing, and have their traditional hairstyles and pray in their noticeable style
 - vii) Secular Jews have continued to reject all faith and be impervious to Christian evangelism
 - viii) A simple and mathematical question comes: “What are the odds that the overwhelming majority of the Jews (if not every single solitary Jew) would suddenly and amazingly convert to Christianity in one generation?” For an answer, ask any Jewish friend or neighbor, or any Orthodox Jewish rabbi... answer: ZERO
 - ix) But I believe that is exactly what Paul is predicting here
- b. “And so...”
- i) There is a strong link to the previous verse
 - ii) “Until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in”
 - iii) The accomplishment of worldwide missions for Gentiles will trigger the final phase of world history... the miraculous salvation of the Jewish nation
 - iv) The Greek word here is “And in this way” or “In this manner...”
 - v) In other words, as God accomplishes His purposes among all the Gentiles, the spirit of jealousy will be so greatly aroused in the Jews that they will come to Christ
- c. “All Israel”
- i) What does this phrase mean?
 - ii) **It CANNOT mean that every single solitary Jew who has ever lived will be saved**
 - iii) Some evangelicals make this terrible mistake, saying the Jews are fine under their own covenant
 - iv) IF SO, why did Paul introduce this whole topic in Romans 9 with such solemnity and anguish?

“I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart”

- v) **John Calvin and other commentators have felt it means “All the elect”**

- vi) They get this from the new identification of the church of Jesus Christ with Israel
- vii) BUT this would necessitate a strange change in the word "Israel" from the previous verse

Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

- viii) Throughout the chapter, the focus has been on the NATION of Israel... the bulk of the physical descendants of Abraham... the Jews
- ix) **Other commentators have felt it means the elect among the Jews**
- x) BUT if so, where is the mystery? Paul is revealing a mystery to us
- xi) Paul speaks of this event as though it were the most astounding and amazing thing that could ever happen, an event so incredible it would be like a dead man rising from the dead

Vs. 15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

- xii) This MUST refer to the Jewish nation as a whole... the mass of the Jews alive in one generation
- d. "will be saved"
- i) Saved must mean what it has meant throughout Romans

Romans 5:9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

- ii) Saved must therefore mean saved by trusting in Christ

Romans 10:9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

- iii) Astonishing truth!!! The fullness of Israel, the final generation of the Jews will en masse turn to Christ and trust in Him

Picture a Hasidic Jewish rabbi with a school of young men who are his disciples; he is wearing the characteristic dress of his conservative sect: a wide brimmed black hat, side locks of hair coming down from his temples, a full beard. His young disciples wear similar clothing without the beards. As he teaches from the Scriptures, he comes to Isaiah 53 and begins to explain how this prophecy CANNOT refer to Christ. Suddenly the Spirit of God falls and the spirit of stupor is removed... he sees clearly that Jesus is the Christ, the

Messiah... the Spirit of God at the same time falls on millions of Jews around the world... some are standing bobbing and praying at the wailing wall in Jerusalem, others are going about their secular lives of prosperity in the financial districts of New York or London, some are eating in a deli in Brooklyn.

None of them will be saved apart from the preaching of the Gospel... but suddenly the same gospel which has been preached thousands of times without fruit now miraculously yields a full harvest

III. Support from Prophecy: The Deliverer Will Come from Zion

A. Paul's Strange Quotations

vs. 26-27 *And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. ²⁷ And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."*

1. Paul reverses the quotation from Isaiah

^{ESV} Isaiah 59:20 "And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD.

2. Why? To emphasize Christ's sovereignty in the salvation of the Jews

- a. "Jews for Judaism" says Paul twisted the Scripture
- b. Paul knew the OT better than any of his modern detractors
- c. He was specifically emphasizing that, only when Christ, by the power of His Spirit, "comes" to the Jews and turns them away from their sin will they repent

3. Two forms of Jewish "godlessness"

- a. Religious Jews have the "godlessness" of trying to earn their salvation through their own lawkeeping efforts while rejecting their Messiah
- b. Secular Jews have the "godlessness" of embracing materialism and wealth and earthly idols of prosperity while neglecting God altogether

4. Christ came to save them from their sins... and this is the essence of the covenant God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob... it is the essence of the New Covenant

vs. 27 *And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."*

Matthew 1:21 you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Jeremiah 31:31-33 "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. ³³ "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

B. Other Support from the Prophets

1. Over and over the prophets predicted the restoration of the Jews
2. Dispensational theologians teach that this means the Jews will be restored to the Promised Land
3. However, the real restoration here in Romans 11 is being grafted back into the Olive Tree of God's Chosen People... grafted back into the Olive Tree of which the Patriarchs are the root
4. So, I read all the prophecies of the restoration of the Jews as ultimately referring to this one promise: "all Israel will be saved"
5. Especially Zechariah 12

Zechariah 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 firstborn son.

Christ will remove the spirit of stupor and of spiritual blindness; instead He will pour out on the Jews a spirit of grace and supplication... and as a people they will look to Christ for salvation, and they will cry out to Him and mourn for Him, the one they themselves had pierced on the cross... they will cry for Him and mourn for Him and love Him and embrace Him and believe in Him

They will weep and wail for the wasted years in which generation after generation of Jews rejected their greatest son... they will weep and wail because of their sins, and they will yearn for Christ

And Christ will save them! He will embrace them and forgive them and justify them and graft them back in

IV. “Enemies” “Beloved”: The Two Ways God Views the Jewish Nation

vs. 28-29 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, ²⁹ for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

A. Gospel Enemies

1. The Jews opposed Paul every step of the way
2. The Jews made every effort they could to stop the Gospel from spreading among the Gentiles
3. The Jews were enemies concerning the gospel...
4. Even today, many Jews use their position of influence to make the spread of the gospel as difficult as possible
5. BUT one of the great joys of the sovereignty of God in salvation: bitter enemies can become precious friends

B. Elect Loved Ones

1. The Jews are still God's Chosen People
2. Originally chosen merely for a physical role in predicting and giving birth to the Savior of the World
3. At that time: the election of the nation to national privileges and of individuals to personal salvation will become the same

C. God's Election Irrevocable

1. WHY? God's unshakeable commitment to His word

vs. 29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

2. The whole problem Paul sought to address: Has God's word failed concerning the Jews?
3. Ultimate answer: NEVER! God's gifts and calling are irrevocable
4. That is true of the Jews, and it will be true of all who have based their entire lives and their very souls to the truth of God's words, God's gospel promises
5. God's words CANNOT FAIL

V. How God's Salvation Plan Humbles All Humanity

vs. 30-32 Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. ³² For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

A. God's Ultimate Goal: His Own Glory in Human Salvation

1. "To God be the glory great things He hath done"
2. The enemy of His glory: all human boasting, all human pride
3. So God must save us in such a way that He alone gets the glory

1 Corinthians 1:27-31 God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things-- and the things that are not-- to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before him. ³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God-- that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. ³¹ Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

B. God's Plan: Binding Us to Sin So He Can Have Mercy

1. Gentiles sinned through wretched idolatry and immorality... NO BOASTING POSSIBLE
2. Jews sinned through rejecting their own Law and their own Messiah... NO BOASTING POSSIBLE
3. God BOUND US to it... He locked us up in our wicked mess, and allowed our sinfulness to have its full history... both individually and as a human race
 - a. The Greek word "God has BOUND all men over to disobedience" literally means "to shut up as a prisoner" or to "bind up as in a net"

^{NAU} Luke 5:6 When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break

- b. God shut us up into our sin so that we could learn how much we needed Christ
4. God orchestrated things so that the wickedness of our hearts might have its full expression, using God's holy law to stimulate our inner lusts; using God's good gifts to become idols; using God's natural drives and innate human

desires to become immoral and corrupt... GOD BOUND US UP TO EXPRESS OURSELVES FULLY

5. And when our full expression of sin was done, and we look around at the pigs we are slopping like the Prodigal Son, we come to our senses and say "WHAT HAVE I DONE? O God have mercy on me, the sinner!!"
6. Thus did God control world history and our own history, not tempting us to sin, not enticing us to do anything evil... but merely putting us in a place where our sin was inevitable, thus rendering us SILENT BEFORE HIS HOLY THRONE, needing MERCY
7. Amazingly: God USED Jewish sin to save Gentiles and He used Gentile salvation to save Jews

Vs. 30-31 Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you.

- a. Jewish disobedience resulted in Christ's crucifixion and in the giving of the gospel to Gentiles... and any Gentile that was saved was saved BY MERCY ALONE
- b. So Gentile salvation has made the Jews jealous, resulting in a yearning for Christ and a realization that they also have become just as disobedient as the Gentiles ever were... their pride is GONE, and they must have mercy

C. Not Universalism

1. Do not misunderstand the "alls" here

vs. 32 For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

2. We know enough from other parts of Scripture to know that Paul is not teaching UNIVERSAL SALVATION
3. Rather he is teaching that, because sin is universal, the only people who can be saved will be those saved by MERCY ALONE

D. Our Theme in Glory: "God Had Mercy on Me, the Sinner"!!!

1. No one will say, "By my own strength I have made it to heaven"
2. No one will say, "By my own wisdom and insight, I made a way to heaven"

3. No one will say, "By my good deeds, by my constant efforts, by my charity to the poor and my zeal for God's name, by my perfect love for God's word I have earned the right to heaven."
4. God has so orchestrated history that our mouths will be silent on the wretched theme of how great we are, and our mouths will be filled with this one glorious theme: HOW GREAT IS YOUR MERCY TO US IN CHRIST
5. We will know full well the fact that the record of all of our sins, perfectly recorded in the books of God, would be sufficient to drag us to hell forever, and we would deserve it
6. We will know also that God has completely and totally forgiven all of our sins through faith in Christ... BY HIS MERCY ALONE, and through nothing we deserve

vs. 32 For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

Romans 9:15-16 "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." ¹⁶ It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.

VI. Application

- A. Humble Yourself Before the Sovereign God
- B. Exalt His Mercy to You Personally
- C. Accept the Mysteries of God's Saving Plan for the Jews
- D. Anticipate the Glories of the Future of Christ's Kingdom
- E. Never Doubt for a Moment God's Power and Ability to Bring Glory Out of Sin and Suffering
- F. Trust God in Whatever Circumstance You Are In
- G. Be Active in Evangelism and Missions
 1. God has a mysterious saving plan for Jews
 2. If God can save the Jews as a nation He can save anyone anytime
 3. Be confident in God's power to use you to lead people to Christ

4. Pray actively for Jews that they might be saved... perhaps God may use you to lead a Jewish person to Christ
5. Realize that God's intricate salvation plan is at work in all kinds of people groups all over the world