

GETTING JACOB SAVED
ROMANS 11:35-36

BIG IDEA: THERE ARE FOUR POWERFUL REASONS TO BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE, LITERAL RESTORATION OF ISRAEL.

REASON #1: IT KEEPS THE GENTILE BELIEVERS HUMBLE ABOUT THEIR STANDING WITH GOD. **VERSES 25-27**, *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, 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. Israel's Unbelief Is for Gentile Benefit. **Verse 25**, *...mystery...a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.*
 - *Mystery: mysterion—A God thing that would be unknown to us unless God disclosed it to us in an act of revelation.*
 - **musth, rion**, οὐ, τὸ, *mystery, secret; (1) as a religious technical term in the cults of the Greco-Roman world, a religious secret confided only to the initiated, secret rite, not used in the NT; (2) in the NT; (a) as what can be known only through revelation mediated from God what was not known before (MT 13.11); (b) as a supreme redemptive revelation of God through the gospel of Christ mystery (RO 16.25; EP 3.9); (c) as the hidden meaning of a symbol with metaphorical significance mystery (EP 5.32)*¹
 - **MORRIS**: *"...is used by Paul 20 (or 21; see 1 Cor. 2:1) times out of 27 (28) in the New Testament..."*
 - Cf. **Romans 16:25-27**, *Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, ²⁶ but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him-- ²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.—MURRAY: "virtually furnishes a definition"*
 - What exactly is the core of this mystery?
 - Not the hardening—Paul has already discussed this at length.
 - Not that all the elect would be saved (as Lenski argues)—that is no mystery.
 - **MOO**: *[W]hat Paul has not yet explicitly taught, and what entails a reversal in current Jewish belief, is the sequence by which "all Israel" will be saved: Israel hardened until the Gentiles come in and in this way "all Israel" being saved.... [W]holly novel was the idea that the inauguration of the eschatological age would involve setting aside the majority of Jews while Gentiles streamed in to enjoy the blessings of salvation and that only when that stream had been exhausted would Isarel as a whole experience these blessings.*²
 - Other New Testament "Mysteries":
 - The Mystery of the Kingdom: **Mark 4:11** *He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you"*
 - The New Testament Gospel message: **Romans 16:25-26** *Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, ²⁶ but now revealed and made known through the*

¹ Bibleworks Friberg Lexicon

² Moo, 716-717

prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him—

- A Crucified Savior: **1 Corinthians 2:2, 7** *For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ⁷ No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.*
 - The Rapture: **1 Corinthians 15:51** *Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—*
 - The Church: **Ephesians 1:9-10** *And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment-- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.*
 - The Church: **Ephesians 3:6** *This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. (cf. Col. 1:26-27)*
 - The Church as the Body of Christ: **Ephesians 5:32** *This is a profound mystery-- but I am talking about Christ and the church.*
 - The Gospel: **Ephesians 6:19** *Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, (cf. Col. 4:3, the mystery of Christ)*
 - Christ Himself: **Colossians 2:2** *the mystery of God, namely, Christ, (cf. 4:3)*
 - The Mystery of Iniquity: **2 Thessalonians 2:7** *For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.*
 - The Mystery of the Faith: **1 Timothy 3:9** *They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.*
 - The Mystery of Godliness: **1 Timothy 3:16** *Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.*
 - The Mystery of the Seven Stars: **Revelation 1:20** *The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.*
 - The Mystery of God (end-times judgment?): **Revelation 10:7** *But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets."*
 - Mystery Babylon (the end-times capitol city of evil): **Revelation 17:5** *This title was written on her forehead: MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*
 - The End-Times Evil City and Satan: **Revelation 17:7** *Then the angel said to me: "Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns.*
- Conceit:
 - Hardening in part:
 - **Acts 28:25-28** *They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet: ²⁶ "Go to*

this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." ²⁷ For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'
²⁸ *"Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"*

- Full number of the Gentiles:
 - Lit., *fullness=plaroma* (so NAS). Might refer to a certain number of Gentiles to be saved, or fullness of blessing on the Gentiles, or the full contribution of the Gentiles, or the Gentiles as a whole.³
 - **Fullness: MOO:** *The word consistently has a qualitative meaning in the Bible—"fulfillment," "completion," "fullness." Some scholars therefore think that the "fullness of the Gentiles" means simply the "full blessing" that God intends to bestow on the Gentiles, or perhaps the "completion" of the Gentile mission. But the imagery of "coming in" does not fit this concept very well. Furthermore, Paul is probably borrowing here another concept from Jewish apocalyptic: the idea of a fixed number of people whom God has destined for salvation. These considerations suggest that the Gentiles' "fullness" involves a numerical completion: God has determined to save a certain number of Gentiles, and only when that number has been reached will Israel's hardening be removed. The "fullness of Israel" (v. 12) is therefore matched by a "fullness of the Gentiles."⁴*
 - **Cf. Times of the Gentiles: Luke 21:24** *They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*
2. Israel's Future Belief Will Blow Away Gentile Conversion Statistics. **Verse 26**, so *all Israel will be saved*
- "So": **MORRIS:** *Refers to what has just been said, i.e., in this way, viz., through the divinely appointed process whereby the hardening of part of Israel brought salvation to the Gentiles, a temporary hardening effective only until "the fullness of the Gentiles" has come in.⁵*
 - All Israel:
 - Not every Israelite without exception, just as there have been exceptions to the hardening.
 - Refers to the nation as a whole.
 - Alternative interpretations:
 - Refers to the people of God regardless of ethnicity, i.e., *spiritual Israel* (so Calvin). However, so far in Romans, Paul has referred to Israel **ten times**, and in every case he means ethnic, national Israel, not a spiritually metaphorical people. In one of those passages (**Romans 9:6-8**) Paul does limit the meaning of "Israel" to "spiritual Israel," but in that case he makes his meaning very clear and in that one verse uses the term "Israel" in both ethnic and spiritual senses.⁶

³ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 420.

⁴ Moo, 718-719.

⁵ Morris, 420.

⁶ **Romans 9:6-8** *It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel [ethnic Israel] are Israel. [spiritual Israel] ⁷ Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."*

⁸ *In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.*

- Refers only to the elect Jews (so Lenski)—But this would be no “mystery” and empties Paul’s comments of their intended “WOW” factor.
 - **MOO:** ...Paul’s teaching about a final ingathering of Jewish people has no parallel elsewhere in his writings.⁷
- Refers only to **the remnant**: **PENTECOST:** ...we understand the “all Israel” in Romans 11:26 to refer to this believing remnant [i.e., the remnant of Romans 9:6], the believing Jews at the second advent of Christ.... While the majority will not repent, some may be turned to Jehovah by these signs [the 144,000 in Rev. 7, the two witnesses in Rev. 11, and the divine judgments poured out on the earth, cf. Rev. 16:9-10].⁸
- Saved:
 - Surprisingly, **John Walvoord** takes this as physical deliverance, not spiritual salvation: *The salvation in view is not that of freedom from the guilt of sin, but deliverance from persecution and trial.*⁹—**However** spiritual deliverance is **exactly** what is in view in Paul’s supporting OT quotation in **Verse 26 of Isaiah 59:20-21** “**The Redeemer will come to Zion**, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,” declares the LORD.²¹ “As for me, this is my covenant with them,” says the LORD. “My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of their descendants from this time on and forever,” says the LORD. AND in **Verse 27 of Isaiah 27:9** By this, then, will **Jacob’s guilt be atoned for**, and this will be the full fruitage of the **removal of his sin**: *When he makes all the altar stones to be like chalk stones crushed to pieces, no Asherah poles or incense altars will be left standing.*
- 3. Jew and Gentile Stand on Level Ground at the Foot of the Cross. **Verse 26**, he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. **Verse 27**, when I take away their sins.”
 - Note **God’s initiative** here: **He** turns—**He** takes away.
 - Note the **cusp of the action** taken: **Removal of sin**. **MORRIS:** *The particular aspect of the covenant to which attention is drawn is that which has to do with the forgiveness of sins (cf. Jer. 31:34). This does not mean that the covenant is concerned only with forgiveness; in fact a good deal more is involved. But Paul’s subject throughout these chapters is justification by faith and how what happened and will happen to Israel fits into that great doctrine. So he concentrates on the sins aspect.*¹⁰

REASON #2: IT HONORS THE VERACITY OF GOD. **VERSES 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.

1. God Made Unconditional Promises to the Patriarchs. **Verse 28**, on account of the patriarchs
 - The Unconditional Promises:

⁷ Moo, 739. But this may be explained by the contingent character of all Paulo wrote. In most of the situations where Paul taught about Israel or the Jews he was concerned to establish the right of Gentiles to enter fully into the people of God—usually against a Jewish-oriented attempt to exclude them or to impose inappropriate restrictions on them (e.g., Rom. 3-4; Galatians; Phil. 3). Only in Rom. 11, apparently, did Paul face a situation in which he needed to remind Gentile Christians of the continuing significance of Israel’s election.

⁸ J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958),

⁹ John Walvoord, *Israel in Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 112.

¹⁰ Morris, 422.

- The Conditional Promises:
 - The Rite of Circumcision: **Genesis 17:10-14** *This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹² For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner-- those who are not your offspring. ¹³ Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴ Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."*
- Promises to:
 - Abraham:
 - The First Articulation of the Covenant: **Genesis 12:1-3** *The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. ² I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*
 - The Cutting of the Covenant (progeny and real estate): **Genesis 15:18** *On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates-*
 - The Third Articulation of the Covenant: **Genesis 17:1-8** *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. ² I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." ³ Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, ⁴ "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. ⁵ No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶ I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. ⁷ I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸ The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."*
 - The Fourth Articulation of the Covenant (at the aborted sacrifice of Isaac): **Genesis** *The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶ and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." **22:15-18***
 - Isaac:
 - Jacob:
 - Judah:
 - David:
 - Solomon:

2. God Has Always Has a Special Place in His Heart for the Jews. **Verse 28**, they are loved
 - Apple of the eye:
 - **Deuteronomy 32:9-11** *For the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance. ¹⁰ In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye, ¹¹ like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions.*
 - **Zechariah 2:7-12** *"Come, O Zion! Escape, you who live in the Daughter of Babylon!" ⁸ For this is what the LORD Almighty says: "After he has honored me and has sent me against the nations that have plundered you-- for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye-- ⁹ I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me. ¹⁰ "Shout and be glad, O Daughter of Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you," declares the LORD. ¹¹ "Many nations will be joined with the LORD in that day and will become my people. I will live among you and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you. ¹² The LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem.*
3. God Will Keep His Promises to Israel—He Always Keeps His Promises. **Verse 28**, as far as election is concerned. **Verse 29**, for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.
 - **Isaiah 54:10** *Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.*
 - **Irrevocable gifts:** i.e., the gifts mentioned in **Romans 9:4-5** *Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.⁵ Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*

REASON #3: IT ITALICIZES THE MERCIFULNESS OF GOD. VERSES 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.*

NOTE A HISTORICAL TEMPLATE: Habakkuk 3:2 *LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.*

1. What's Good for the Goose... **Verse 30**, *Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy*
2. Is Good for the Gander. **Verse 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.*
 - **MOO:** *The last day...will reveal that God has treated all equally* "imprisoning" all in disobedience—Gentiles before Christ; Jews since Christ's coming—so that he could have mercy on all—Gentiles in the present age; Jews (making up for their small numbers now), in great numbers at the end of the age.¹¹
 - **Cf. the current judicial blindness of Israel: Isaiah 6:9-10** *He said, "Go and tell this people: "Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' ¹⁰ Make the heart of this people calloused;*

¹¹ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 713.

make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed." [Quoted in Matt. 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26-27).

3. We All Swim in the Same Dirty Pond. **Verse 32**, *For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.*
 - **Romans 3:9** *What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.*
 - **Verse 32: MORRIS:** *"given them over to disobedience"... Paul is not saying that God predetermined that all should sin, but rather that he has so ordered things that all people, Jew and Gen tile alike, being disobedient, show themselves to be sinners...and have no other escape than through his mercy.*¹²

REASON #4: IT BRINGS GLORY TO GOD. VERSES 33-36, *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!*³⁴ *"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"*³⁵ *"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"*³⁶ *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen*

NOTE: MORRIS--*Now comes a characteristic quotation from Scripture which seems to have elements from several passages (see Isa. 40:13; Job 15:8; Jer. 23:18...)*¹³

1. God's Dealing with the Jews is Mind-Blowing. **Verses 33-34**, *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!*³⁴ *"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"*
2. God's Grace Is Utterly Undeserved. **Verse 35**, *"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"*
 - **Romans 4:1-5** *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? ² If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about-- but not before God. ³ What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." ⁴ Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. ⁵ However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.*
3. God's Impressiveness Is Over the Top. **Verse 36**, *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen*
 - The Purpose of it all: *It's not about you!*
 - Translate into my life goals and guiding purposes.
 - Look at your calendar and checkbook.
 - What is your involvement in Kingdom-spreading work? Missions?
 - Glory: *doxa*=that which is impressive, weighty.
 - Cf. a kickoff touchdown return and the screaming fans on their feet.
 - *as a manifestation of light radiance, brightness, splendor (AC 22.11); (2) as a manifestation of God's excellent power glory, majesty (RO 9.23); (3) as an excellent reputation honor, glory, praise (JN 5.44); (4) as a state characterized by honor, power, and remarkable appearance glory, splendor (LU 24.26); (5) of a person created in the image of God reflection, glory (1C 11.7); (6) **do, xai** as angelic powers around God angelic beings, majesties, dignities (JU 8)*¹⁴

¹² Morris, 426.

¹³ Morris, 428.

¹⁴ *Bibleworks* Friberg lexicon.

Timothy G. Walton
Alderwood Community Church
May 31, 2009