

Paul's Epistle to the Romans

Romans 11:25-36

Mystery within Eternal Purpose

Romans 9-II: God's Sovereign Choosing

1. **Eternal Purpose**: **Rom 8** ended in worship praising God for the inevitable process of His Sovereign foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justifying and glory
2. **Mountaintop of Glory**: Paul now shares his heart burden for his 'separated' chosen brethren Israel who have come to view their "Chosenness" of more value than God's Sovereignty **Rom9.1-3**
3. **HPOV**: **Rom.9-II** Paul in his stewardship of the gospel to the gentiles has also been given a revelation regarding this mystery of how a Sovereign God is dealing with His Chosen at the present time and this was evidently crucial to help maintain the unity of the church in Rome

HPOV: Overview of Romans 9-11

Revealing the Mystery

1. to understand the breadth of these 3 chapters it is best to start at the end with **Rom. 11.17-36** where he reveals the **Mystery of God's Sovereign Mercy**
2. then we can go back to **Rom 9** and see how God is presently dealing with Israel
3. then in **Rom 10** see how Paul contrasts the righteousness of faith and the zealous righteousness of the Law by works
4. Finally we go back to **Rom 11.1-16** where we understand how God's Sovereign Mercy does not reject his wayward chosen ones but disciplines to recover them

Romans 9-11: the God who foreknows and predestines (Rom 8) deals with Israel in His Eternal Purpose

1. Only Christians who are maturing as sons (Rom 8) will understand God's Sovereign Discipline as part of His eternal purpose in Christ

2. there are 2 perspectives looking at Rom 9-11 which determine our maturity

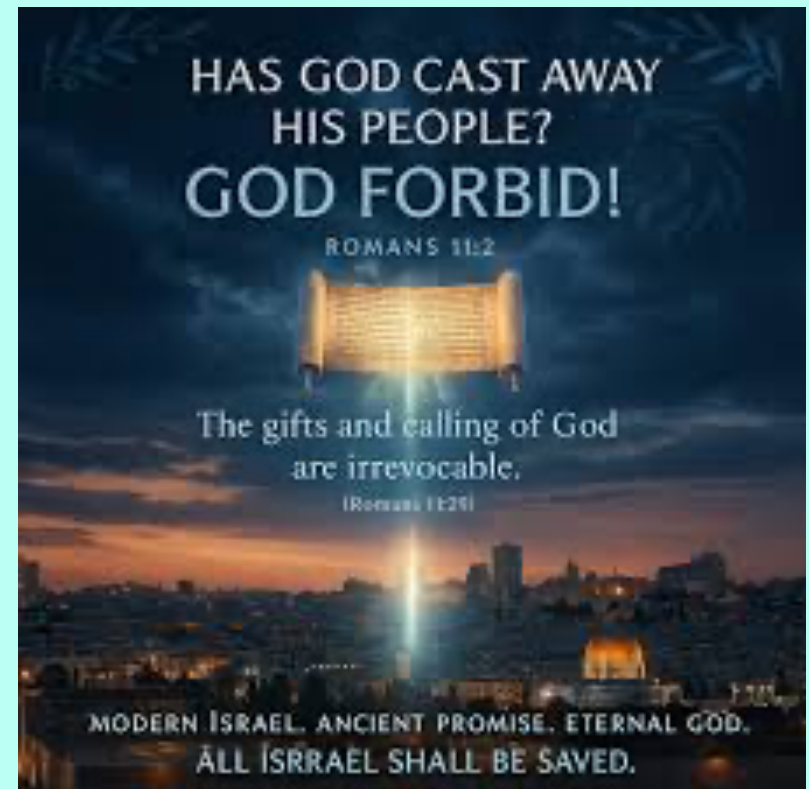
a. if our POV is still self-centered, the chapters seem to be Paul defending God's Sovereignty, saying who is "chosen, who is not"; warning of the fearfulness of God's severe discipline and possible rejection, and interrupting his gospel to talk about Israel

b. if our POV is more God-focused, we see the "mercy" behind the Potter's hands, the Patience of God disciplining his Sons, and the Heart behind the ways of the All-wise God



Romans 11.15-36: Mystery of Israel's Chosenness

- 1. Rom 9-11 is a section dealing with Israel's present rejection of the Messiah**
- 2. the section logically proceeds out of the revelation in Romans 8 of God's predestination and choosing**
- 3. Israel's general rejection of the Messiah raises real questions which need answers in Rome where the original converts were mostly Jews**
 - a. How are the saved Jews in the church now related to their family, Race, Judaism, Jerusalem?**
 - b. Has Israel's rejection caused God to cut them off from salvation's promise as the Chosen family of God?**
 - c. Has the church now become the new Israel replacing God's former plans and promises for Israel?**



the Parable: the Olive Tree - Romans 11.17-24

Rom 11.24 For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.

- 1. the olive tree is used in the OT as a picture of Israel (Jer.11.16-17)**
 - a. the ancient roots of Israel's tree are Abraham and his "seed" (Patriarchs) which God planted on earth as a Testimony of JHVH**
 - b. Olive tree is a symbol of endurance: ancient, reliable, indestructible, perennial and fruitful**
 - c. Olive oil was used to anoint kings and priests and became a symbol of the Spirit's anointing that gives light to Israel's Testimony Lamp**
 - d. Later in the prophets the olive tree became a type of the "anointed ones" (mashiach) ruling over Israel (Zech.4; Rev.11)**
- 2. the Olive Tree stood as a metaphor of the Kingdom of God planted by a Sovereign King JHVH and called to be a chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation and God's own possession**

the Parable: the Olive Tree - Romans 11.17-25

Rom 11.25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this **mystery** — so that you will not be wise in your own estimation — that a partial hardening has happened to Israel...

Olive Tree a Parable of a Kingdom Mystery

1. **Mystery: why are many gentiles being saved but Israel is rejecting their Messiah?**
2. **Rom 11.25 the Answer: there is now a partial hardening upon Israel until the fullness of the gentiles has come in**
3. **Olive tree is a Testimony of the Kingdom of God on earth which is more than just Israel and presently made up of original Israel branches (a saved remnant) and many wild Gentile shoots saved and grafted in by faith in Christ**
4. **The Olive Tree explains the mystery of Israel's disobedience and rejection of the Messiah**
 - a. **this tree is not an eternal testimony but a present testimony of God's Kingdom on the earth throughout the history of His faithful Chosen**
 - b. **God the Husbandman "broke off" Israel's disobedient branches because of their unbelief (similar to conditions in Jesus' "Vine and branches")**

the Parable: the Olive Tree - Romans 11.17-25

Rom 11.17-18 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.

Olive Tree: Grafted into the Life in Christ

5. Another Mystery: we are to presently live in the Kingdom as living shoots grafted into the Olive Tree of Messiah

a. We live in an Organic Union by Grafting: The olive tree is not merely a symbolic picture but represents a living, grafted life. Christians are "wild olive branches" grafted by the Sovereign and Merciful Hand of the Father into the tree supported by Christ the rich root of the cultivated olive tree.

b. The Process of Grafting: This involves being cut off from the old, wild "Adamic old man" when baptized and joining us to Christ's divine life in His Body (the olive tree)

c. Living a "Hybrid" Life: this organic grafting makes believers "divinely human and humanly divine," allowing them to absorb the nourishing "sap" of Christ's life and bear fruit in the Kingdom

Part 2: the Parable: the Olive Tree - Romans 11.17-25

Rom 11.23-24 And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.

Olive Tree Testimony of Kingdom Mystery

5. **The Olive Tree will one day be full of Jewish and Gentile Branches**
 - a. **God can Sovereignly graft back in the original branches when they turn from their unbelief and His work among the Gentiles is complete (Rom.11.23-25)**
 - b. **Gentile Christians as wild shoots are now being grafted in by faith as long as they humbly “abide in Christ” or else they also can be cut off through disobedience (Rom.11.19-21)**
 - c. **Now if Israel’s rejection from the Testimony Olive Tree resulted in the reconciliation of the nations, when they are grafted back in the Testimony will be tremendous - like life out of death (Rom.11.15-16)**
 - d. **Rom11.22 Here is the Mystery: God who sovereignly chooses also deals by either kindness or severity in order to keep the Testimony of the Messiah**

Part 3: Mystery: Sovereign Way of Mercy - **Romans 11.30-32**

Rom 11.32 For God has shut up all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

Olive Tree Mystery of His Mercy

- 1. Paul is using this parable to show how the Sovereign God of election unites both Jews and gentiles into one olive tree by His Mercy alone**
 - a. Rom 11.30** Gentiles who were once disobedient sinners were shown mercy because God mercifully opened the way sovereignly through Israel's disobedience
 - b. Rom 11.31** as Israel looks upon the mercy shown to gentiles they will become jealous to receive such mercy
- 2. Rom 11.32** So all the branches have been grafted into the Messianic Vine by the mercy of God and by no merit or boasting
- 3. This is what it means to be Chosen: called to be a testimony of Jesus the Messiah and disciplined by God's Sovereign mercy by the "kindness and severity of God" Rom 11.22**

Summary: the Mystery - **Romans 11.25-29**

Rom 11.25-26a For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this **mystery** — so that you will not be wise in your own estimation — that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in and so all Israel will be saved

This Mystery regarding Israel was uniquely revealed to Paul as part of his stewardship to the gentiles (Eph.3.6)

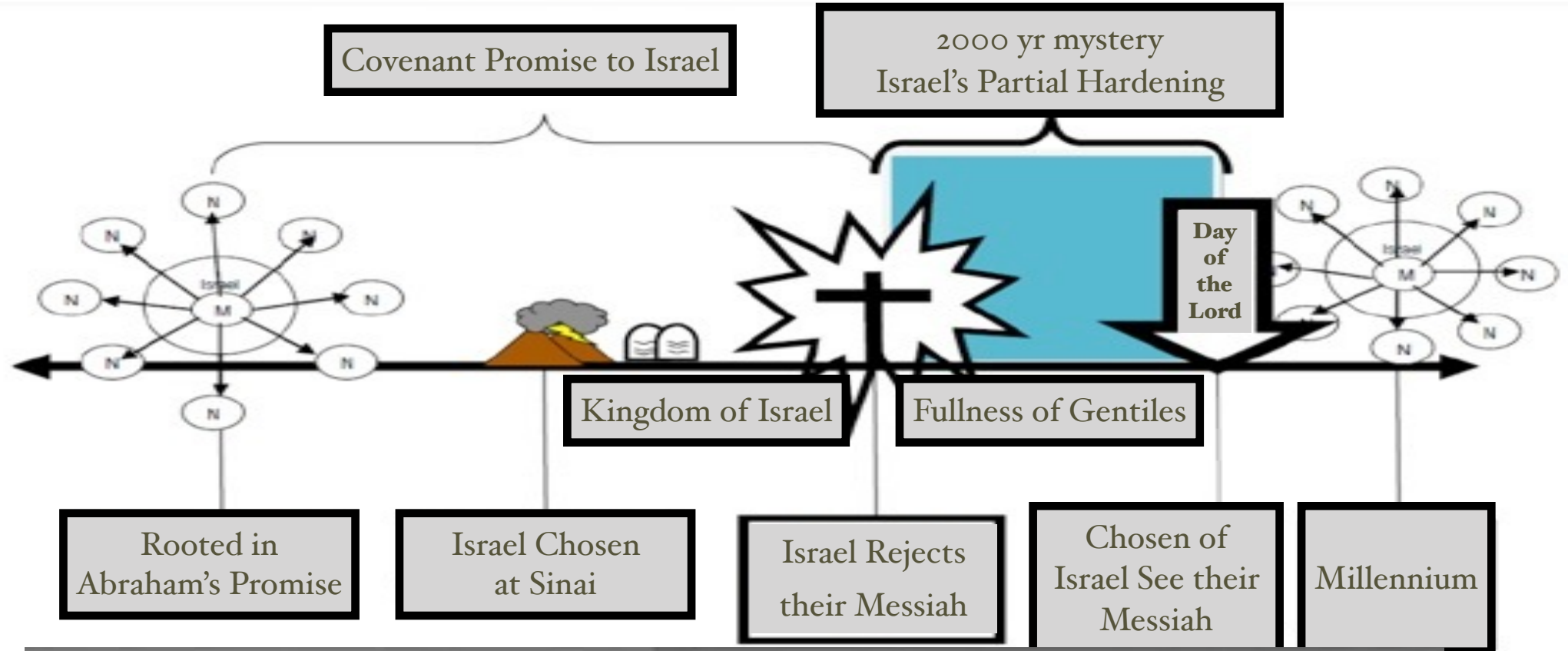
1. **Rom. 11.25** a “mystery” is always something God is sovereignly doing which is not understood except by revelation
2. **Rom. 11.25** Revelation of the mystery: God is sovereignly using the hardened hearts of most of Israel for a season to save and gather in Gentiles
3. **Rom. 11.26-27** but the prophets reveal all Israel will be saved according to prophecy given 700 yrs before (**Isa.59.20-21**) by a Redeemer who would remove ungodliness from Jacob by a new covenant taking away sins
4. **Rom. 11.28** so right now from the GospelPOV the Jews are enemies hindering the gospel and yet from HPOV they are still God’s “chosen and beloved” for the sake of the fathers
5. **Rom. 11.29** God who remembers His promises to the fathers never takes back either his calling or the gifts he has given to His children

Rom 11.33 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

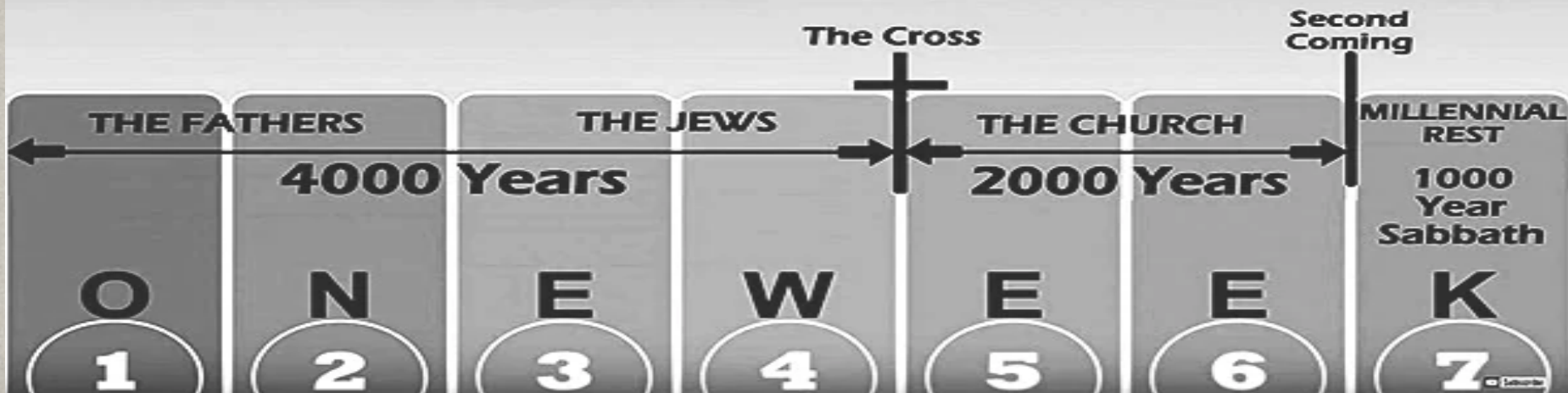
Paul has just revealed a great mystery of God's Mercy with a spiritual wisdom which the world cannot understand

1. **Rom 11.33** Paul ends these three chapters with a praise doxology to God
 - a. It was a revelation of the “**riches of God's Mercy**” that caused worship even though to some it seemed to be a contradictory explanation of being “**Chosen**”
 - b. It was a revelation of how God will redeem Israel even though the **severity** of His methods seem to contradict His **kindness and mercy**
 - c. Before such mysteries Paul humbles himself because to see anything of the “**depth of the riches**” humbles man's wisdom which seems so poor by comparison
2. **Rom 11.34-35** Paul quotes from other worshipers who saw the Sovereign God's Mercy (**Isa.40.13; Job 41.11**) and declared that no one is able to be God's counsellor nor was His wisdom ever gained from someone else
3. **Rom 11.36** All Wisdom comes from God as the source, agent and purpose behind “**all things**” and so all the glory belongs to Him now and forever

A 2,000 YEAR BIBLICAL MYSTERY



Millennial Week "One day is as a thousand years" (2 Peter 3:8)



Romans 11.15-36: Lessons from this Mystery

1. God's Wisdom works in time with eternity in view

2. God's Kingdom is greater than either Israel or the Church

a. Israel in their pride thought being the Chosen people was greater than loving and obeying the Sovereign King

b. Christians in their pride think once saved they can now boast that God loves them with confidence even though despising discipline

3. God works all things together for His good

a. His kindness will turn to severity in order to produce sons for His Son's Kingdom

b. Disobedience to our calling opens the way for others to obtain mercy

4. God's way with all his children is to remove all grounds for boasting and humbly join them together as one on the basis of Mercy alone

5. There is still more to be known about these mysteries which are yet hidden to us: (what is "partial hardening"? what is "the fullness of the Gentiles"? what does "all of Israel will be saved" mean?)



Paul's Epistle to the Romans

- next time: Rom 9
- Predestined Plan for Israel