

(25) Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the ‘fullness of the Gentiles’ has come in. And in this way ALL Israel will be saved, as it is written,

(26b) “The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will banish ungodliness from Jacob”; “and this will be My covenant with them when I take away their sins.” (Isaiah 59:20; 27:9)

(28) As regards the Gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. For God has consigned all to disobedience --- that He may have mercy on all!

(33) Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!

(34) “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?” (Isaiah 40:13)

(35) “Or who has given a gift to Him that he might be repaid?” (Job 35:7)

(36) For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen.

Think on These Things

- 1) Don’t be “ignorant” (i.e., unknowing) of the mystery. In the Bible, especially in the New Testament, mystery refers to a “new” revelation God is giving to His people (Colossians 1:25-27, for example). According to the end of verse 25, what is the mystery Paul refers to now?

The “mystery” being revealed here is that Israel is experiencing a “partial hardening” towards God until something called the ‘fullness of the Gentiles’ has run its course.

- 2) In the Old Testament, we are told that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. Why did He do this? See Exodus 4:21 and 10:20, and Romans 9:17-18. Why has God hardened the Jews’ hearts for a time?

Exodus confirms that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. In Romans, Paul tells us that God raised up Pharaoh specifically for the Exodus deliverance moment in order to demonstrate His power and extol (magnify) His name among all the nations of the earth (quoting Exodus 9:16).

Here, the hardening of Israel is tied to God’s plan and purpose identified as the “fullness of the Gentiles.” The Gentiles are to “come in.” Israel’s current sluggishness or non-responsiveness is part of God’s plan to bring non-Jews into eternal life. When the full number of Gentiles are brought in (saved), the Jews’ hardening will end.

- 3) Who are God’s people? Let’s review Romans 9:6-8, 25-28; 10:12-13; and 11:11-12. Look also at Galatians 3:26-29. So, when you read “all Israel will be saved,” does this promise belong just to the Jews? In regards to the Jews, will it be a mixed-obedience “all” or an obedient “remnant”?

Romans 9 clarifies that though Abraham had many sons (8), His covenant with Abraham pertained just to the child of promise, Isaac. Further, not even all those direct descendants through Isaac are considered the ‘True Israel’; God mentions that only a ‘remnant’ are true Israelites. Romans 10 says that salvation comes to Jew and non-Jew on the basis of faith, which

makes us true children (i.e., descendants) of Abraham. Romans 11 confirms that Gentiles of faith are now part of the True Israel.

Romans 11:26 concludes that once the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, and Israel's hardening has been lifted, **ALL ISRAEL will be saved**. As presented here, it appears that all Israel means the FULL number of Jews AND Gentiles God intends to save --- those whose similar faith makes them true descendants of Abraham, and God's children of promise.

Galatians adds that Jew and Gentile distinctions disappear in Jesus! Understanding this, it seems proper to conclude that the 'remnant' of faithful Jews that God says have always existed are those who will enter into His Kingdom, and not all those who are Jews by direct lineage. (Remember - based on physical lineage - the Arabs are Abraham's descendants, too!)

- 4) Read Daniel 9:20-27. Daniel is told that there are "70" weeks until sin is ended, and vision and prophecy comes to an end (v. 24). There will be "69" weeks until the Anointed One comes and then is cut off (killed, v. 25). The 69 weeks --- each week representing "7 years" --- applies to the 1st coming of Christ: 483 years (69 x 7) from the decree from Cyrus for the Jews to return to Jerusalem. The final "week" of 7 years (v. 27) is a description that fits the Tribulation period found in Revelation. So, what about all the years between the death of Jesus until the beginning of the tribulation? Some scholars refer to them as "the times of the" what (Romans 11:25b)?

This period is interchangeably referred to as, "the times of the Gentiles" or "the fullness of the Gentiles." Many Bible scholars believe that this is the age we now live in, the time when God is filling up His house with true believers among all nations.

- 5) Explain why the Jews are considered "enemies" of the Gospel (v. 28).

The two biggest reasons are: 1) led by their religious leaders, the Jews had Jesus killed; and 2) the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah (Christ) and consequently persecuted Christians, who put their faith in Him. Though there are "Messianic Jews" (Jews who have converted to Christianity), Judaism still rejects Christian teachings that Jesus is their long-sought Messiah.

- 6) How do you understand v. 29, God's calling and gifts are irrevocable? How might understanding this be helpful to your walk with the Lord? What does this mean for the Jews?

What God promises, He will do. Unless God places conditions, whatever He promises -> He will do! **Our hope and faith are built on this important truth**. We count on God coming through! As for the Jews, they rely upon the several covenants God made with their ancestors (the patriarchs) to be His chosen people. (It is also their Old Testament scriptures that speak of a believing remnant within their community.)

- 7) What is the end of this "hardening" period the Jews are in today? See v. 32.

V. 25 says their period of partial hardening lasts until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. V. 32 points to God's mercy awaiting them, just as He has shown mercy to the Gentiles.

- 8) Read Isaiah 55:8-9. Verses 33-34 from this chapter make it clear that sometimes it's hard to understand God's thinking and plans...like this "fullness of the Gentiles" mystery. What can help us? See 1 Corinthians 2:16.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul says we have the “mind of Christ” to help us understand God’s ways.

People and situations I want to pray for this week: